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Spirit heralds new era in NSL club ownership



Anzac Day round preview inside

By Aidan Ormond

After years of talk and woolly strategic alliances with a variety of clubs worldwide Australia finally has an NSL club majority owned by an off-shore football organization. By this Friday Scottish giants Glasgow Rangers should have 51% equity in Northern Spirit.

And with the lack of financial backing - via TV and corporate sponsorship - holding back, and in some cases crippling, a number of NSL clubs, this Rangers deal may offer a window into the future.

Ambitious Australian clubs, frustrated at the lack of access to capital investment and a national body seemingly unable to provide a top-down revenue approach, will no doubt monitor the Northern Spirit/Glasgow Rangers association with much interest.

"The deal has not been finalized, we're in early days of due diligence with Glasgow Rangers which we hope to finalize by April 28," explained Northern Spirit Chairman Remo Nogarotto.

"At that point we will enter into a Heads of Agreement between the two clubs which, at the end of the day, will formalize the agreement between both organisations and deliver 51% of the total equity in this club to Glasgow Rangers," he added.

Spirit had been talking to a number of clubs overseas regarding accessing capital through such a move - the Rangers connection coming however from Spirit and Socceroo physiotherapist Bill Collins, a former Glasgow Rangers employee.

Asked if there were any risks associated with such a venture, Nogarotto could only speculate.

"The only risk is that the overseas club controlling the local club could subsume that Australian club's identity. Thankfully at this stage that hasn't been the approach Rangers have taken."

Only time will tell, although given the strong brand name of Spirit in the Sydney market place, Rangers' view is spot on.

"Glasgow Rangers have done their market research and were genuinely surprised by the Northern Spirit brand and its reach in the market place. In fact they offered the view to me that it would be suicidal to dilute the Spirit brand name, which pleased me no end," noted the Spirit Chairman.

"The big advantage a relationship like this brings to a club such as Northern Spirit is capital. We have to be realistic in this country and understand that the capacity to generate or accrue working capital is limited.

"Soccer is viewed behind other football codes in the sports investment community in Australia. One way to attract capital is to look overseas at clubs and markets.

"Rangers' capitalization is in the hundreds of millions. But more than that it is a brand name and competency that has been built up over a hundred years. They are the biggest club in Scotland and one of the biggest in Europe."

Nogarotto sees these relationships as working both ways, with the financial benefits accruing to local clubs as a key factor from an NSL point of view.

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Wolves' Supercoach

Nick T open to offers but Wollongong is "unfinished business."

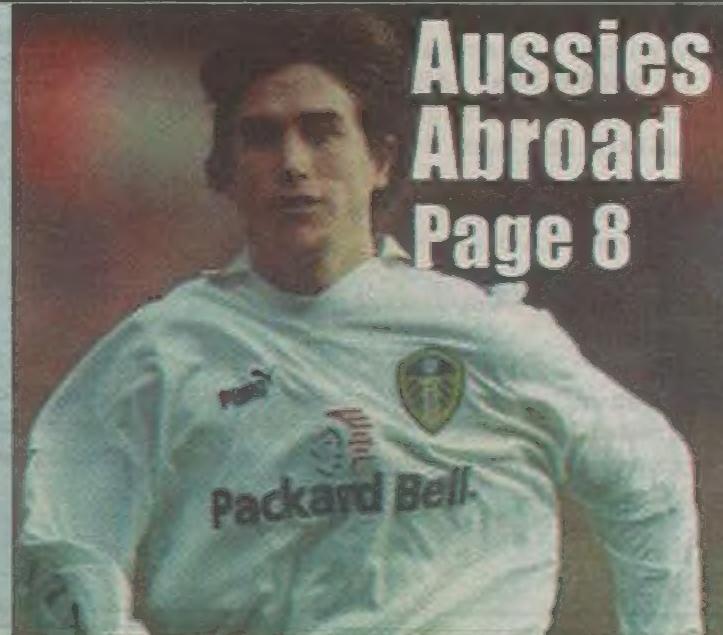
Cosmos' Tom Sermanni

Defends players after public criticism.

Spirit on the Central Coast

Excellent new stadium: Report inside.

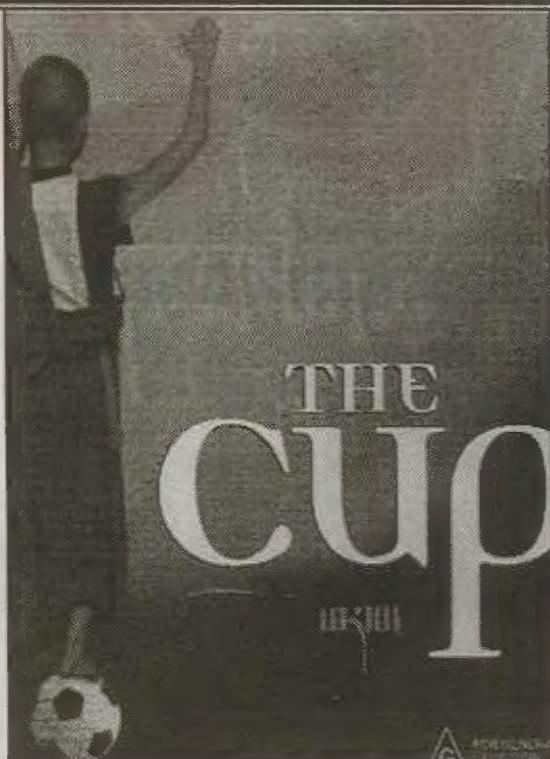
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S-news

Inside Soccer's Australian news and views

SOCCEROO GAMES IN JUNE

That's the hope although the Argentina game is definitely off, with Paraguay now a possibility, with negotiations in progress. June 11 was the original date set down, the same day as the NSL Grand Final. We can only hope that sanity prevails when it comes to this date. Socceroos to play at North Power Stadium on Central Coast? S-news would like to see that!

POSTI'S POSTING IMMINENT?

Word from the byzantine world of Soccer Australia is that championship double winning coach Ange Postecoglou will be anointed new Young Socceroo/Joey coach. Nothing is being said but that is where the smart money is. Their next camp is in July. If true, would he take with him his South Melbourne assistant Karl Hafford?

MARK JANKOVIC'S RESTAURANT

Remember Marconi, St George and Socceroo striker Mark Jankovic? The lad was 'a bit special' as some might say. And like Breakers' John Buonavoglia he too has a restaurant. It's called La Seconda at Winston Hills Shopping Mall. Tell them S-news sent you.

JASON CONNOLLY'S BACK

He was a Wollongong player until he was caught with some illegal substances in his bloodstream. These weren't performance enhancers but he was banned anyway. He is now back playing, this time at Blacktown City Demons coach Brian Brown has the 30-year old playing as a striker.

OPEN DAY AT HEIDELBERG

Remember those awesome Heidelberg South derbies? Here's a chance to reminisce about the era of Andy Bozikas and Charlie Yankos. Heidelberg United Alexander Soccer is having an open day for all supporters of the club to come down and meet past and present players of the club. Show your support by being there. Date: 7/5/00 Time: 1.00pm Entry: Free

There will be drinks, food and entertainment available on the day, as well as soccer clinics held for juniors to participate. And for all you net heads log onto www.heidelbergunitedsc.com.au for the latest from this VPL side.

POWER AT POWER CREDIT

The Power players will be at Power Credit Union in Parramatta this Thursday April 27 between 5pm and 7pm. You can also buy all your Parramatta apparel at the store. And any Power fan who joins Power Credit Union will go into a draw to win four corporate tickets for the Kingz game on May 7. Oh, and Captain Power will be there!

MELANESIAN CUP

Fiji and Solomon Islands have qualified for the 2000 Oceania Nations Cup after the Melanesian Cup last week. That means Wolves' Esala Masi and Kingz' Batram Suri will be playing. Meanwhile over in NZ All White and Roeselare (Belgium) striker Kris Bouckenhege has scored four goals for his Belgian club and is expected to spearhead the Kiwi U/23s against South Africa in their Olympic qualifier. Meanwhile Kingz' Stu Riddle is now studying at the University of Louisiana after quitting the club. Unfortunately he can't play collegiate football over there because he has played professionally in the NSL.

COASTIES LEGEND

At 35 Central Coast Coasties defender and 300-gamer Mark Drysdale may be nearing the end of his career, but playing at North Power Stadium gave the old warhorse a real lift. With four kids and a day job with the Police, training and playing may be taking its toll, but he looked like he was enjoying every minute of the big double header on Saturday night. "Unbelievable stadium, great surface. This will give Coast soccer a huge lift," said the loyal club servant, who joined the club in 1981. After the game the local boys in blue were calling him 'superstar'!

Sermannini defends trio "They are of good character"

By Aidan Ormond

It was an up and down seven days for Canberra Cosmos last week. A 6-0 home loss to the rampaging Wolves was followed by an excellent 2-1 away at North Power Stadium on the Central Coast against new and occasional tenants Northern Spirit. In between those two games unflattering comments by a Cosmos player regarding some of his teammates were printed last week in *Inside Soccer*.

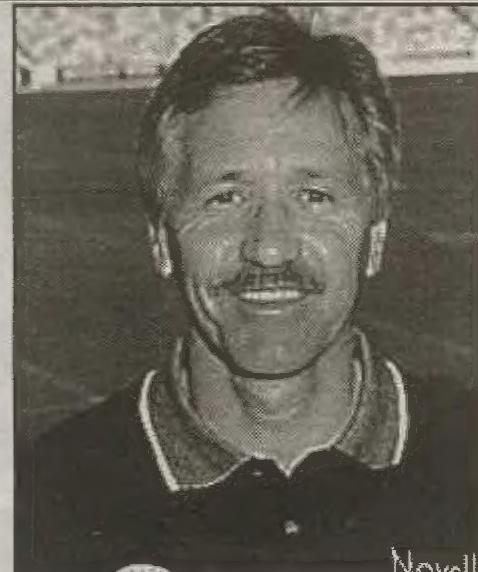
This story was then picked up by the Canberra media.

Speaking with *Inside Soccer* after the Spirit win, Cosmos coach Tom Sermannini (right) said he was disappointed by the comments made and sprang to the defence of the players in question.

However he added that the player responsible for speaking out had come forward, which was "to his credit" and that the matter would be dealt with in-house.

"The players targeted, Jason Polak and Scott Imports Brian Hamilton and David Winnie," said Sermannini, "have all had long and distinguished playing careers at the highest levels. Their professionalism is beyond reproach. They are young men of integrity and good character and do not deserve the unfounded criticism that was aimed at them."

He continued: "Due to the inconsistent performance of our team this season Jason, Brian and David become the easy targets for the critics. However there is no player in our squad who has performed with such distinction



this year that he is in the position to level criticism at any other player.

"The comments in the article break all unwritten codes within team sport and in themselves display a lack of professionalism."

• The key point regarding the Cosmos this year is that it has more than doubled its points tally from last year. Local ACT clubs have also come to the aid of the club by contributing around \$100,000 to its flagship side.

Perhaps now - with this brouhaha behind them and a terrific win on Saturday night - the Canberra media can start positively supporting its NSL side?

Continued from front page

"I think what's happening worldwide is clubs like the Northern Spirit are looking at ways to access new venture capital. So Australian clubs are looking off-shore, while clubs like Ajax, Rangers, Arsenal, Inter and others are looking to spread their tentacles and access not capital but new markets."

There may also be an exchange of players both ways (for example, Rangers players not playing regularly may be given a chance in the NSL, or young Spirit stars training and playing in Scotland.)

The Spirit Chairman accepts that there may be marketing and footballing personnel from Rangers "to blend their knowledge with the local scene," but as he is quick to point out, "nothing dramatic should change. Rangers accept that Australians know how to run an Australian club."

"I'm feeling absolutely excited because clubs in the past have talked about these sorts of ownership situations without anything coming of it. The notion of a controlling (51%) interest appeals to Nogarotto because alliances and sister club relationships in the past were 'airy fairy without substance.'

"I'd be very pleased to see that Spirit will be the first to attract one of the most respected brand names in world football."

"We had that with Palace but in fairness to them they are a minnow compared with Rangers."

I wondered about the vision for



V for Victory? Remo Nogarotto will be hoping the Rangers deal is a winner.

the future in, say, five years' time.

"Well," said Nogarotto reclining back after another long day at the Spirit office, "the objective is simple. Both Rangers and myself want to make this the most successful club in Australia and there is a five-year business plan to back that up."

"They aren't coming to Australia to buy a controlling interest in a side that will be languishing ... Rangers has an excellent track record of success and we want to become the Glasgow Rangers of Australian football."

Northern Spirit is a club that prides itself on innovation in domestic Australian soccer. This is further proof of their desire - largely driven by the passionate Nogarotto - to take the lead in Australian soccer.

The deal has the potential to really cement a club like Northern Spirit - a side that exists without the financial backing of large licensed premises such as Parramatta Leagues or Club Marconi.

No doubt many Australian clubs will closely monitor how this deal works out. If it succeeds expect the floodgates to open.

Nick T denies South offer

By Greg Blake

No, Nick Theodorakopoulos he has not been approached by South Melbourne, as was I believe reported somewhere in the usually searchingly accurate foreign language press last week. But yes, he would consider an offer from South Melbourne - or any other club for that matter.

"As far as I'm concerned it is unfinished business with Wollongong at this stage," says Theodorakopoulos, who knocked back the Olympic job a couple of years back to stay on the south coast.

"But as a professional football coach I would be silly not to consider other offers at the appropriate time."

Meanwhile, further to last week's *Inside Soccer* piece on Wollongong's quartet of double-figure sharpshooters, it seems even the 'Gong boss is struggling with long-term memory.

With Scott Chipperfield, Esala Masi, Stuart Young and Saso Petrovski all in 10 goals or better land this season I posed the question as to whether this fearsome foursome was un-matched in NSL history. God bless NSL stats fiend, Andrew Howe, who came up with the three previous occasions in which teams have produced four players to hit double figures in a season.

"It has never happened before," insisted an emphatic Nick T when I had a yarn to him last week.

Well, not since 1984 anyway, when Peter

Katholos (16 goals), Mark Koussas (11), Jimmy Patikas (10) and one Nick Theodorakopoulos (10) combined for 47 goals for a Sydney Olympic team which lost that season's grand final to South Melbourne.

Also, Ian Souness (12), Kenny Boden (12), Murray Barnes (11) and John Kosmina (11) produced 46 goals in Sydney City's 1981 championship season.

But the most lethal quartet in a single season was produced by the 1984 Marconi team which didn't even make that year's divisional grand final, with Rod Brown (18), David Lowe (14), Mark Jankovic (11) and Tommy McCulloch (11) combining for a record 52 goals.

For the record, the Chipperfield-Masi-Young-Petrovski combo had totalled 51 goals between them going into last weekend, almost certainly ensuring them a place in the history books before season's end.

Unlike most coaches - most of whom seem intent on dismissing record-breaking feats as irrelevant - the Wolves boss is as happy as a clam to have his posse of sharp shooters aiming at some NSL milestones.

Prior to last weekend's matches Wollongong was just one goal shy of the NSL's long-standing regular season goalscoring record of 68 goals, posted by Sydney City in 1982, as well as the 70 goal mark recorded by Adelaide Force (1995/96) and Sydney United (1996/97) in all games including finals.

"We'd love to have those records," he said.
"We'd be proud to have those records."



Nick Theodorakopoulos: open to offers but Wolves is "unfinished business."

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LEGEND



GREG BLAKE
C7 SOCCER COMMENTATOR

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Easter Bunny commitments meant a short working week at 'Inside Soccer', thus the first chance to comment on that remarkable round 30 contribution to the NSL history books.

Half a dozen goals worthy of season best nominations; two individual double hat-tricks; Wollongong leading the way with an avalanche of goals; Newcastle ripping the premiership race wide open; Adelaide and Power keeping the finals race alive in some style; leads changed and scoreboard attendants (that's not a job, it's a career) Australia-wide were rushed to hospital suffering exhaustion and worse as a 40-goal weekend set a league record single round average of five per game.

The purists can primp and preen and fuss about the standard of the NSL and blah, blah, blah, blah.

All very interesting, I'm sure, but personally I'm a sucker for action and drama and the pure joy of a football-inspired adrenaline rush. That one special weekend proved once again that this league can rock with the best of them.

You've gotta love this game

And just to underscore the serious nature of NSL footy these days the gamish on a red-hot week of footy came via events off the paddock.

Reports of dressing room punch-ons at Canberra, at least one coach a heartbeat away from putting both barrels to the temple, Hamilton Thorp offering his soiled laundry to Perth boss Bernd Stange, some curious goings-on between Marconi and club skipper, Brad Maloney, and Newcastle's off-field ownership puzzle nearly blowing the club's chance of on-field success in Perth.

As they say, it's all happening.

When you're watching two or three games every weekend for a fair slab of time it's easy to forget great games, sizzling goals and sometimes even very special players.

I re-learned that lesson just a week or so back when Simon Colosimo (pictured) started his first senior game for Carlton to finally ice his comeback from that horrific injury.

He wasn't best on ground, nor did his performance dictate the result of the game as South Melbourne thundered home to win a 5-3 thriller.

But for a brief 20 minutes or so of sheer brilliance Colosimo was pure art - in a class of his own.

I'd forgotten just how good the kid is.

Good to see ya back, champ. We're not worthy.

Also terrific to see veteran thirty-something, Kimon Taliadoros, back in NSL ranks.

As you might have seen in the pages of Inside Soccer last week, Taliadoros is taking on a fill-in role with Parramatta Power after being out of the game for more than 18 months.

Aside from being one of the sleekest movers around in his prime, Taliadoros also put a huge amount more into the game than he ever really had to in his role with the once laughable players' union, helping turn that particular body into the strong and credible association it has proved to be in recent years.

The now six-club NSL champ was just five games into 1998/99 and a new sweeping roll at Sydney Olympic before he fell to what appeared to be a career-ending knee injury.

Like all true champs, Taliadoros deserved a more fitting farewell to senior footy than that.

If he can add a bit to the Power this time around he can pick his own time to go.

Surely the Freudian slip of the season to date from the governing body itself recently.

An official Soccer Australia press release was apparently offered up as an explanation for the debacle surrounding the 'dramatic postponement' of Newcastle's round 29 home game against Parramatta Power.

And on the basis of that particular incident the NSL 'will not undertake an overhaul of its wet weather procedures,' according to league GM, Stefan Kamasz.

The release added: ...'this is the first time I cannot recall a hiccup with our current system in relation to wet weather.'

And so say all of us.

Honorable mention in the press release stakes goes to Perth Glory, who recently listed one addressed as Mr. Vicki Juric.

Either a gaff or we humbly offer long-time Soc.Aus. staffer, Vicki Juric, our sincere congratulations on the successful surgery.

Recently caught up with eminently likable Victorian ex-pat, Brian Brown, the former Brunswick Juventus NSL 100-gamer now coaching at Blacktown.

And like just about everyone else involved in the various state competitions Brown is hoping an NSL second division gets the nod to go ahead.

"To be honest, for people like myself it is a real ray of hope," he admitted.

And while all of today's games are quite significant, more so the occasion of the day.

Like many thousands of other brave souls, both my late Dad and both my Grandfathers served Australia proudly during world conflicts.

Lest we forget.

It has also become recently fashionable to bag Sydney Olympic for wilfully topping up its roster with recent acquisitions like Kresimir Marusic, George Goutzioulis, John Perosh and Alex Duric for the run-in to the finals.

Goodness knows why Olympic and its coach, Branko Culina, have become magnets for such vacuous criticism; there is a championship at stake after all.

And not a word about, say, Wollongong, which has drafted in the likes of Dino Mennillo and Mark Robertson in the new year.

Culina would actually have been very stupid NOT have had a dip at luring Marusic, a mid-fielder who came off the production line chrome-plated and who boasts an NSL finals pedigree second to very few.

One obvious key to Newcastle's success this season has been in the club's ability to keep players at least relatively fit and on the paddock during this particularly arduous 1999/2000 campaign.

The Breakers boasted a league-high five ever-present players going into last weekend, three of whom had started in every one of the club's 29 games to date.

That's in stark contrast to the likes of Brisbane, Melbourne Knights, Northern Spirit, Parramatta, Perth Glory, Olympic and South Melbourne, all of whom had not one single ever-present player to the same point of the campaign.

And no other NSL club has had more than one player to feature in every game of what will be the league's longest regular season on record when round 34 is completed on May 7.

Interesting to see which players can complete the marathon season, with the following thoroughbreds having played in all their club's games going into last weekend:



Angelo Costanzo (30 starts/0 as substitute for Adelaide City); Bojo Jevdjievic (30/0 for Gippsland); Ivan Videlich (29/1 for Kingz); Jason Polak (30/0 for Cosmos); Dean Anastasiadis (30/0 for Carlton); Kris Trajanovski (17/13 for Marconi); Tom Podeljak (30/0 for Sydney United) and Robbie Stanton (30/0 for Wollongong). Newcastle's marathon men are: Bob Catlin (29/0); Andy Roberts (26/3); Todd McManus (29/0); Glenn Spod (28/1) and John Buonavoglia (29/0).

Just in case the feat went un-noticed, the little master, Damian Mori, has just about single-handedly destroyed Northern Spirit this year with two of the season's overall nine hat-tricks scored by 'Frogga' against the Sydney outfit.

In round 12 he went to North Sydney Oval and bagged all three goals in a 3-0 Adelaide Force win and in the round 30 return game Mori knocked in a lazy four in his club's 4-2 rout of Graham Arnold's team.

The Kingz must be the league's moodiest team. With an almost palpable level of disinterest the Kingz were utterly lamentable in being cleaned out 4-0 in round 30 by a Melbourne Knights team which had lost its previous two games by a combined scoreline of 7-0.

Just three days after the club's inept worst-ever NSL loss the Kingz bounced back to trounce Parramatta Power with a club best-ever 4-0 win.

And Power went to Auckland for that rescheduled round 16 game last week coming off a club-record 4-0 blast of Sydney United.

Come to think of it, this whole schizophrenic league could do with an hour or two on the analyst's couch.

In the first major outbreak of common sense at Knights Stadium in living memory the Melbourne Knights have actually appointed their senior coach for next season already.

The big 'Moose', Vlado Vanis, has sensibly been given the nod for season 2000/2001, giving him plenty of time to plan ahead for next summer - a luxury rarely afforded previous coaches at the club.

The new(ish) Knights board has finally broken with a flawed club tradition of waiting until the club's off-season AGM to confirm the coaching post, a situation that in the past often gave the senior coach six weeks or less to prepare for an NSL season.

An all-time derby game low of a mere 4,373 through the Olympic Park turnstiles for the round 30 match-up between Carlton and South Melbourne tells the tale - yet again.

If Carlton is serious about getting bums on seats Olympic Park is no longer an option.

Except in the case of big occasion games soccer punters have snubbed the venue for any number of reasons for many years, with at least four NSL clubs experimenting with and ultimately giving up on the old venue in the past decade.

What are the odds on a refurbished Bob Jane Stadium boasting co-tenants next season?

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Anzac Day NSL round preview

On a day when Inside Soccer remembers all those that went into battle many years ago the Anzac Day Round 32 games bring together a number of classic battles that have a vital bearing on the outcome of this intriguing run into the finals.

The match of the day is in Perth where the Glory and Sydney Olympic clash. Both teams have been struggling of late - particularly the home team who have suffered at the hands of two NSW sides - while Olympic need another win to keep a safe distance between themselves, in fourth spot, and the menacing Adelaide City, in seventh position.

Glory have lost two in a row, including a vital 1-2 home loss to Newcastle Breakers, while the visitors managed to scrape home 2-1 against Parramatta Power on the weekend after a rough few weeks where they managed only two draws in their previous five games.

The return of Gabriel Mendez (right) and Kresimir Marusic nicely settled in, Olympic are poised to show improved form and will provide Glory with a stern test.

Coach Bernd Stange is resigned to losing Troy Halpin for the rest of the season but has

finally got Kasey Wehrman back with the club having missed more games than he has played for his new club.

Wehrman's absence because of national team duties and suspension and the loss of Con Boutsianis and Halpin has affected the team severely.

Glory's depth is certainly being tested with Jamie Harnwell, due to injury, and Hamilton Thorp, due to a disagreement with the coach, also not playing.

Stange will be hoping that two of his promising youngsters, Ivan Ergic and Ljubo Milicevic (who made his starting debut on the weekend) can rise to the occasion.

With the pressure on both sides expect a high-scoring draw in front of a good holiday crowd in Perth.

In Melbourne the football loving fans are in for another classic confrontation between dethroned champions South Melbourne and arch-rivals Carlton.

Just over a week ago the two combatants played one of their best clashes when the champions came back from a 2-3 scoreline deep into the second half to hammer in three unanswered goals.

After a lifeless 0-0 draw against a ten men Newcastle team last Friday Carlton is the

team in most danger of elimination from the top six as the fast finishing Adelaide City Force continue their winning ways.

The return of Simon Colosimo has added depth to the Stuart Munro's team, but with the pressure off them South Melbourne look capable of providing another headache to their Melbourne nemesis.

Meanwhile, the consistent Wollongong Wolves have climbed to the top of the table almost unnoticed but a strong attacking philosophy from coach Nick Theodorakopoulos has seen them break the NSL goal scoring record, and they will unleash all their scoring might on the disappointing Parramatta Power at the Powerhouse.

When the Wolves come to town expect to be entertained, however the inconsistent Power team will aim to salvage some pride from this disappointing year.

The wily Wolves coach said his side's disappointing 2-2 home draw with Strikers was a wake-up call "of the biggest magnitude you can imagine."

He went on to use the stock market crash as a metaphor for his side's "hopeless" (match report p.15) "the bottom fell out"-style capitulation on Saturday.

"We were overrated and overpriced," he added.

There were no injuries or suspensions for Wolves going into the Power game. Theodorakopoulos added that he is not thinking of the top two; he is only focussing on each game as it comes.

A rejuvenated Marconi Stallions, who have put themselves within striking distance of both Perth and Wollongong, make one of the most difficult trips in the league.

Although Melbourne Knights have been one of the form teams in the latter stage of the season, Marconi should come away with a win on the back of the red-hot form of Zeljko Babic, who has scored in six successive games, and striking partner Francis Awaritefe, who is back to his annoying best.

Newcastle Breakers should consolidate their top six position with a win when they visit bottom placed Sydney United while Adelaide City can keep the pressure on the teams above them with a victory over the visiting

Gippsland Falcons. The Victorians won 3-2 on the weekend, so a surprise is not out of the question, but expect a Zebs win.

The other two games which are of purely academic interest sees the Kingz visit struggling Canberra Cosmos and Brisbane Strikers entertain the most disappointing team of the season, Northern Spirit.



Chi Chi Mendez and Olympic visit Perth for the top six blockbuster.



Scott Chipperfield and the Wonderful Wolves come to Sydney today.

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Super League Starsearch

When you visit Parramatta Stadium for today's Super League/NSL triple header (see ad in this issue) you may just see a glimpse into the future. The NSW Super League is the logical breeding ground for NSL

stars yet surprisingly few actually make the step up. However, those who have boast impressive NSL credentials: Goal-machines John Buonavoglia and Saso Petrovski, defensive hardman George Souris and creative midfielder Vlado Zoric to name just four currently in NSW.

Plus, around Australia the state leagues are filling the devastating void the overseas player drain is having on our NSL stocks. Many of the Brisbane Strikers' successful current campaign are from the Queensland XXXX league, while Dion Valle has made the grade at Glory via Macarthur Rams and South's Anthony Magnacca is a former star of the VPL.

So, to begin our nationwide look at 'players to watch' here are three part-timers (a plumber, courier and an auto shop assistant) who - among many other future stars - may not be household names on the Australian scene, but we reckon in two years time you may be racking them in your NSL team's colours as full-time footballers.

Remember, you read it here first ...

Andrew Nicol (Leichhardt Tigers)

At 19 he is big, strong, skilful and forms part of a defence that has only conceded 19 goals in 13 games going into last weekend's

game. The Tigers had no hesitation in putting him forward as their choice of 'player to watch.'

Nicol (top left) is a former Ryde City player who was brought across by respected coach Les de Celis and, like most teenagers, has his sights set on the NSL and beyond.

"Ideally," he explained while on holiday in Noosa last week, "I would like to play a few strong seasons in the national league then maybe try in Europe. I've had friends who have gone to England and I would love to follow in their footsteps."

Last season Nicol could have trialed with Northern Spirit but he preferred to wait. "I've seen some other players trial at NSL level but after they did not make it their careers have sort of gone downhill, they felt so let down by it."

"As such I thought I may wait until I was bigger and stronger and ready for it. I've probably benefited both physically and mentally by waiting."

This Tiger hopes to trial in this off-season with an NSL club despite being under contract for another two seasons.

Today Nicol was due to come up against another NSL-potential Super League player in Blacktown's Mark Hagger. The Nicol v Hagger contest put off due to the latter's suspension.

"Yeah, Mark is someone I really respect. I am really looking forward to the duel whenever we play each other."

Nicol is a player that will always be valued in the physical NSL; strong and dominating defensive lynchpin complemented by a silky touch. Sort of a David Cervinski. Ironically his favourite club is Wollongong.

**Adam Anderson
(Parramatta Eagles)**

Running just behind Mark Hagger on the Super League scorers' charts is

Parramatta Eagles' Adam Anderson.

Anderson, just turned 20, has been at Parramatta for three years, working his way up from U/21s to seniors after starring for CSI Schofields in the Youth League.

His physique is not the biggest but he knows his way to goal and is clearly relishing his Super League days. Recently he scored four against Eastern Suburbs to give him 13 goals going into last weekend's games.

"I love soccer and in my career I would like to be as successful as possible. NSL is obviously my ambition. Super League is physical and you get a bit sore after the games but I can handle it."

"I'm quick, sharp and a good finisher so hopefully one day I will get my chance."

Anderson (above) is very confident that despite their position (fifth going into last weekend) the Eagles will win the Grand Final.

A big call? "Yes it is but if you look at last year's side as compared to this year's, we are much stronger."

Chi Chi Mendez - a famous Eagles old boy - is Anderson's hero while overseas he looks to Michael Owen for inspiration. He also names 18-year-old Parramatta Eagles sweeper Daniel Borg as another player to watch ("he does his job well and is efficient at clearing up at the back.")

"Penrith and Parramatta is a great derby and so it will be a very tough game and one worth seeing," he said of today's game.

"What I really want to do is give up my day job so I can play full-time."

Mark Hagger (Blacktown City Demons)

Hagger's 'Swagger', 'Four Goal Demon', 'Mark's The Man'. This season Blacktown City's Mark Hagger has seen all the headlines

as his 17 goals have catapulted him into the limelight. An early contender for player of the year the former Marconi youth player (and leading youth scorer) knows that, as a striker, playing in a senior side can only help.

"When Eddie Krmecic came in at Marconi I had been scoring regularly in the youth team but with the likes of Awaritefe, Sean Babic, Kris Trajanovski and others it always was going to be hard for me," Hagger (above) said, who signed for City in preference to being on loan to them.

"Super League is very physical for sure, and I'm not the biggest of blokes. It took me a while to learn how to use my body but my coach Brian Brown has helped me greatly."

"He believed in me and takes me aside when I get too cocky!"

Hagger views Bonnyrigg and Leichhardt as the main dangers to City's title hopes.

"Tigers' goalie Shaun Woods is my best mate so I can't wait to play against them today, while Steve Karavataki really impressed me last time. He is a really good striker" said 'Hitman' Hagger, who is suspended for today's vital game.

So if you are searching for stars of the future, Nicol and Anderson will be on show today at Parramatta Stadium.

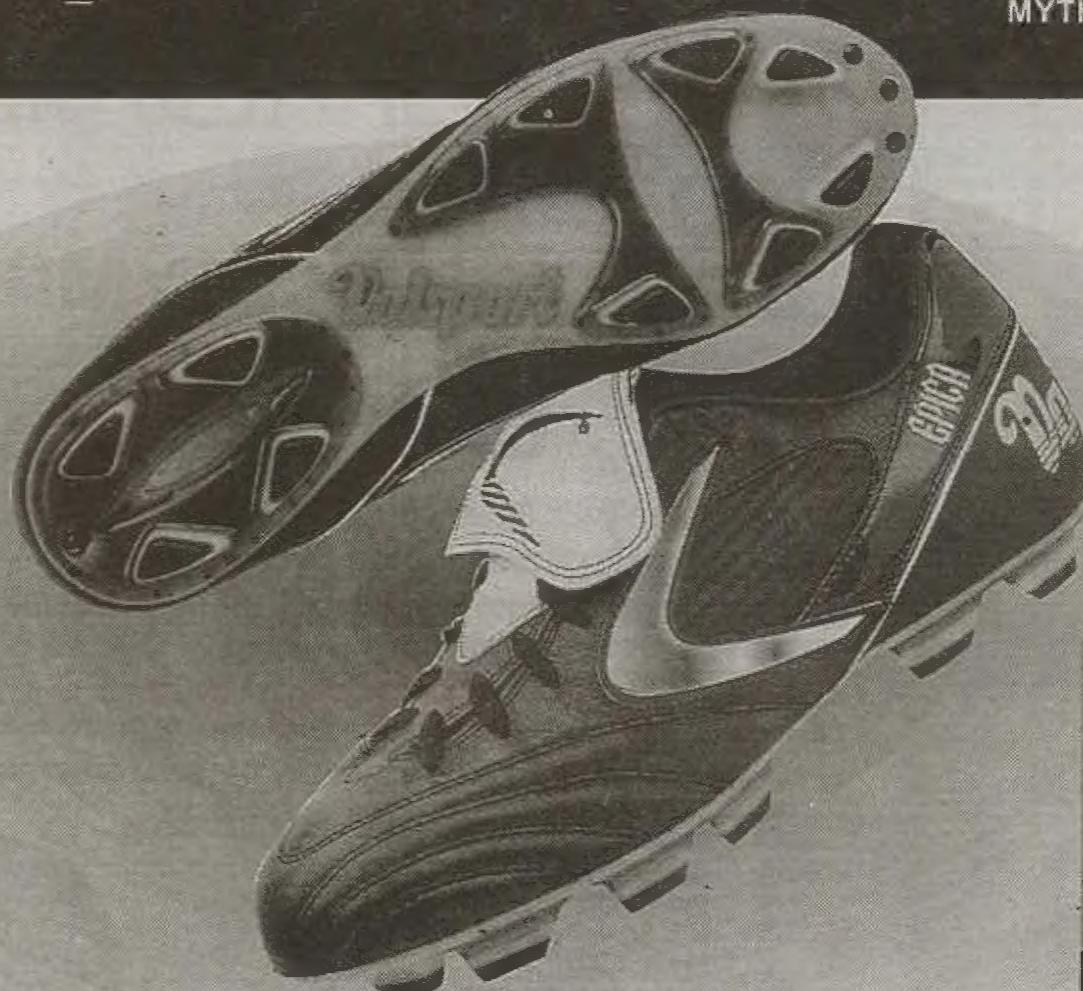
And with an NSL game following them, the pressure will be on to impress.

Aidan Ormond

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Thorpedo sunk by angry Stange

By Brett Kluczniuk

Perth Glory defender Hamilton Thorp looks to have brought his career at the club to a premature close. The big defender tore off his shirt and threw it to the ground as he stormed off Perth Oval having been substituted just 36 minutes into the match against Newcastle Breakers in the round 30 fixture. Thorp did not acknowledge his coach Bernd Stange on the Glory bench as he made his way directly to the change rooms.

Stange labelled Thorp's behaviour as "totally unacceptable" before indicating the player was no longer part of his plans. "It's totally unacceptable what he did. I don't plan with Hamilton Thorp for the future," Stange fumed.

The Glory coach was quick to point out that the shirt throwing was only the latest in a line of incidents between the two. "Everybody thinks the shirt is the reason. It's never a reason. The question is, is such a player able to play on the highest level ... if you are not ready you have to go."

Earlier in the season Stange had questioned Thorp's fitness and commitment to Glory - he was later frozen out by the coach after being sent off for dissent against the Kingz in Auckland.

It wasn't only Stange that was upset by Thorp's petulant gesture. General manager Roger Lefort saw the action as disrespectful to the club and its supporters. "As far as I'm concerned the shirt incident is a very serious one. It's almost an insult to our sponsors and it's certainly not good from the club's point of view.

"People have got to be accountable, and they have got to perform, and if the coach takes you off then they've got to accept it," Lefort said.

"I think they (the players) have to be a bit more mature in their attitude towards the game and towards the decisions made by the coach.

"Thorp's contracted for this year and I would say there may be an opportunity to get back in at a later stage, but the final decision will be made by the coach," he said.

After the match, Thorp admitted he had made some mistakes but he was not the only Glory player to have been performing below par.

He said he regretted throwing the shirt and apologised to sponsors and supporters. The defender still has 12 months to run on a two-year contract, but is unlikely to be sacked by the club over the incident.

The most likely outcome looks to be a move to Europe where it is known a Norwegian club is interested in the solidly built defender.

Unfortunately, Thorp was not informed of Stange's decision before the story broke in *The West Australian* newspaper. As a consequence, he did not know where he stood and stayed away from that morning's training session at Perth Oval.

After previous run-ins with Stange, the defender knew he was walking on a knife's edge. "I felt I had to prove myself to him and one mistake was all that it would take for me to be out ... There's been a few different things (that have happened) but I was quite happy to stay in Perth and dig deep and

try to get into the team. But it didn't matter how good I played I wouldn't be first choice."

He added he did not expect to play another game for the Perth-based club.

Thorp is the latest in a string of Glory players to have had public run-ins with Stange which have seen their removal from the club. Socceroo midfielder Ernie Tapai was released just a matter of weeks into the 1998/99 season having become vocal at not fitting into the German's plans.

Olyroo keeper Danny Milosevic was savagely criticized in the media by Stange after being sent off against Gippsland Falcons in March 1999. The coach refused to speak to Milosevic for a fortnight and he would play no further part in the Glory side that made that season's finals.

Crowd favourite Vas Kalogeracos was sent on his way last November when it was reported Stange was unhappy with the forward's attitude and match performances, "he has not been giving me the commitment I need from my forwards," Stange said at the time.

And just two months ago midfielder Con Boutsianis left the club on less than amicable terms in a blaze of publicity after some very public clashes with the club.

Meanwhile, Troy Halpin's season came to a premature end last week when it was revealed that he has torn a medial ligament in his left knee which doctors expect will keep him out of action for up to eight weeks.

With Glory having only a couple of games left in the regular season, the former Socceroo (left) will need an extraordinary recovery to have any chance of playing in this season's finals.

"It doesn't look good," he said. "I've been



Hamilton Thorp: unlikely to play for Glory again.

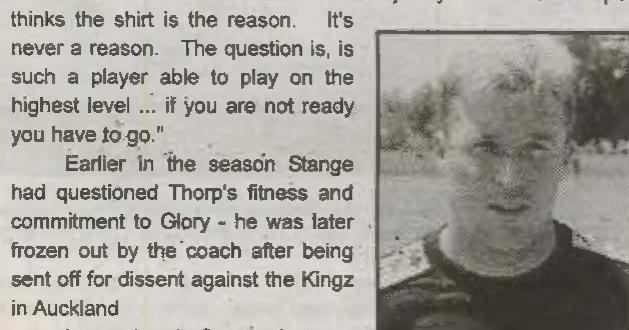
told six-eight weeks, but obviously the doctors look at the worst case ... Even if I was fit enough to get back we would be in the finals and I don't think Bernd Stange would want to make too many changes."

Halpin, one of the best ball players in Australia, suffered the injury against his former club, Newcastle Breakers, in that ill-fated round 30 game against Breakers.

The Breakers have singled out Halpin for some tough treatment in the past, but it was a straightforward challenge which forced him out of the game at half-time. "It was just a block tackle. I'd never had a knee injury before so I didn't really know how bad it was. I tried to give it five minutes of limping around and I might regret it because I've been told I've probably done more damage," Halpin said.

Despite the prognosis, Halpin has not given up the hope of playing in the finals. "I'm hoping to be in the pool soon which was the thing which helped me recover from the hernia," he noted.

"It's low-impact so I can work on my fitness without doing any damage."



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3.30pm Parramatta Eagles v Penrith Panthers
5.30pm Blacktown City v Leichhardt Tigers
7.30pm Power v Wolves Match

Tickets available from all Ticketek outlets including Parramatta Leagues Club and at the ground
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AUSSIES on the world stage

A round-up of how our Aussies players fared abroad this last week ...

Socceroo Tiatto to play in Premier League?

Aussie Danny Tiatto is on the verge of joining the elite Premier League as his team Manchester City continued their charge for the second spot with a 2-0 home victory over Tranmere in front of almost 33,000 fans.

Tiatto played the full game but was also booked.

Stan Lazaridis' Birmingham team also kept up their momentum for a play-off spot with a 0-2 away win over Crystal Palace. Lazaridis was in the squad but remained on the bench as Birmingham retained its fifth position.

Craig Foster was in the Palace line-up but was replaced in the 75th minute.

Aussie Harry Kewell's prominence among world footballers is set to reach a high point as he bids to become only the second player to win the English PFA player of the year and young player of the year in the same season.

Andy Gray is the only previous winner of both Professional Footballers' Association awards, scooping the twin-prize during his first stint with Aston Villa in 1977.

Kewell has been named on the six-man short list for both awards, recognition of a startling season for the young Australian, who has spearheaded Leeds' brilliant Premiership campaign and their run to the UEFA Cup semi-finals.

However, although Kewell will be a hot

favourite for the young player award, Manchester United skipper Roy Keane and Sunderland sharp-shooter Kevin Phillips seem set to battle it out for the award which was won last year by David Ginola.

The only previous winner in the shortlist is Newcastle captain Alan Shearer, with Liverpool defender Sami Hyypia and Manchester United striker Andy Cole also in the hunt.

As expected, Leeds are well represented in the young player shortlist.

Kewell is joined by Elland Road team-mates Michael Bridges and Lee Bowyer.

During the midweek UEFA Cup semi-finals Kewell was out of luck as Leeds could only manage a 2-2 home draw with Galatasaray who advanced to the final on a 2-4 aggregate.

Leeds had a couple of opportunities brilliantly saved by former Brazilian World Cup winner Taffarel early in the game and then had the ignominy of being sent off in the 43rd minute after an alleged stamping incident with Romanian international Gheorghe Popescu.

In the Premier League on the weekend Kewell was in the Leeds team as they drew 2-2 away to Newcastle United. Leeds are still in the hunt for a place in the Champions Cup but they are now in five points behind Liverpool and two points behind Arsenal who have a game in hand.

Kewell played the full game and one of his runs earned Leeds a penalty late in the game but Ian Harte failed to put it away.

In the Champions Cup semi-final favourites Manchester United were bundled out of the competition when they were surprisingly beaten 2-3 at home by Real Madrid. Aussie Mark Bosnich did not participate in the game as his injury had not recovered sufficiently.

But in the Premier League Manchester clinched the Championship for the sixth time in eight years with a 1-3 away win over Southampton. Bosnich was not part of the on field celebration as the injury kept him on the sideline again.

In other Premier League games, Mark Schwarzer was in the Middlesbrough goals as they held Chelsea to a 1-1 draw in London to derail the Blues' surge towards a top three finish and automatic entry into the Champions Cup.

Richard Johnson came on in the 86th minute as Watford went down 3-2 to Arsenal.

The final chapters of the season promises to provide an exciting climax to the Nationwide First Division with Aussies set to feature in the promotion race. With three

games to go Charlton has clinched one of two automatic promotion positions with an eight point lead over second placed Manchester City and twelve points ahead of third placed Ipswich.

Wolverhampton also maintained its challenge for a top six play off position with a 2-0 home victory over fourth placed Barnsley. Kevin Muscat played the full game as the Wolves remained in seventh spot, three points behind the all important sixth placed Huddersfield.

Jason Kearton's Crewe Alexandra is making a valiant bid to stay in the First Division by collecting another three points with a 3-2 home victory over Stockport. Kearton played the full game which kept in fifth last position.

Shaun Murphy was the backbone of a stronger Sheffield United defence that didn't allow Nottingham Forest to score but his forwards weren't able to score either as United attains a respectable mid-table position.

In QPR's 3-1 home win over Ipswich Aussie George Kulscar came on in the 74th minute with the loss proving costly to Ipswich's promotion chances as it allowed Manchester to skip clear of them.

Swindon is going down fighting with the last place Dons beating Fulham 1-0 at home. Frank Talia was in goals for the home team who are doomed for the drop to the Second Division.

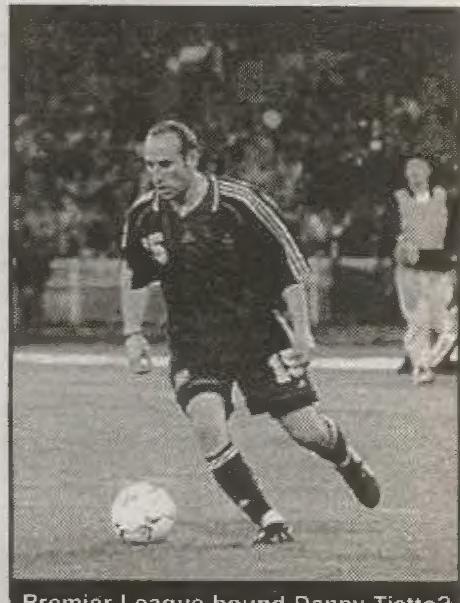
West Brom's 2-1 away loss to Walsall allowed their opponents to leapfrog over them but both them are in danger of relegation sitting in third and fourth last spot respectively. Jason Van Blerk was part of the West Brom team but was replaced in the 87th minute.

In the Nationwide Third Division, Millwall suffered a setback to their promotion ambitions when they were defeated 4-3 by fellow promotion chasers Burnley. Had Millwall won they would have been in equal second spot but the defeat places them in sixth position, safe amongst the play off contenders and three points behind second placed Wigan with only three games to go. Tim Cahill played the full game and scored in the 87th minute while Lucas Neill came on in the 58th minute.

Steve Mautone's new club Gillingham is making a late challenge for promotion in fifth spot three points behind Wigan but with a game on hand. Mautone remained on the bench for the duration of the game.

In the Scottish Premier Division Celtic continued their miserable end to the season with a 1-1 draw at home to Hibernian. Mark Viduka didn't play but fellow Aussie Stuart Lovell was the Hibs scorer.

In Germany Paul Agostino continued his



Premier League bound Danny Tiatto?

late season success story playing the full game for 1860 Munchen as they drew 1-1 at home to Stuttgart.

Ned Zelic - who said in the weekend press he may never come back to live in Australia - was absent from the game.

In SSV Ulm's 0-1 loss to Hertha Berlin David Zdrilic made his return from injury but was replaced in the 46th minute. Joe Simunic has not yet made his appearance for Hertha after his long lay off because of injury.

Paul Okon can't wait for this season to end as he again remained on the bench as Fiorentina went down 1-0 to Serie A leaders Juventus.

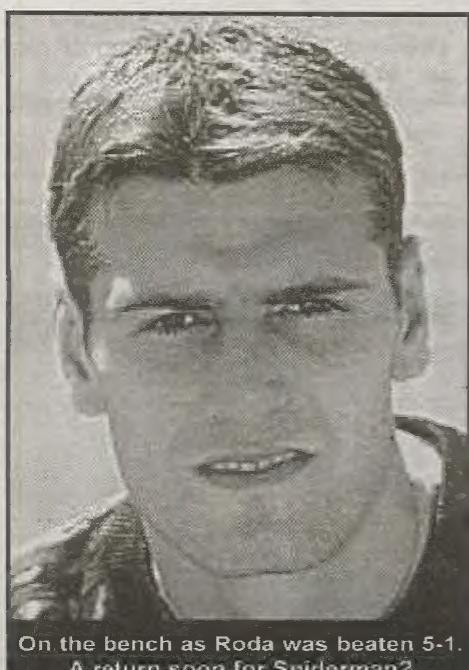
In the Serie B neither Marco Bresciano nor Vince Grella were part of the weekend action for their respective teams, Empoli and Ternana.

In Holland Zeljko Kalac was back on the bench for Roda JC in their game against SC Heerenveen. The big Aussie 'keeper probably wouldn't have minded too much as Roda were hammered 5-1 (a swift return for Spider?).

Ante Milicic continues to get a run in the first team in the latter stages of the Croatian first division. Milicic played the full game as Rijeka were beaten 2-0 away to third placed Osijek.

The forgotten Aussie striker received good reviews but missed a couple of good opportunities.

Rijeka are in fifth spot, two points away from the European bound fourth position.



On the bench as Roda was beaten 5-1. A return soon for Spiderman?

Genc to play in Singapore?

By Scott O'Donnell in Singapore

It wasn't a very happy Easter for the Aussies here in Singapore. Round 7 of the S.League started on Wednesday night with Darren Stewart's Balestier Central losing yet again, leaving them with a solitary point at the foot of the table.

Gombak United scored their only goal in the 22nd minute and although Balestier pressed, they just couldn't break down the Gombak defence.

Balestier coach, P.N. Sivali has a small, inexperienced squad to work with and although no-one is questioning the commitment of his players, the fact remains that they will continue struggle for points as they cannot compete with the likes of SAFFC, Home United and Geylang who can afford the luxury of having national team players sitting on the bench.

Mirko Junji's Sembawang Rangers gave Clementi Khalsa their first win of the season, going down 2-0 at home.

The Marine Castle Dolphins came back to earth with a thud losing 4-1 to Tanjong Pagar. The Dolphins who boast Aussie duo Michael Garcia and Anthony Carbone were no match for Tanjong Pagar and if not for their keeper, the score-

line could have been even more embarrassing.

SAFFC continue to lead the competition with their 1-0 win over Home United, who went into the game without former Socceroo Ernie Tapai, who is still struggling with a hamstring strain.

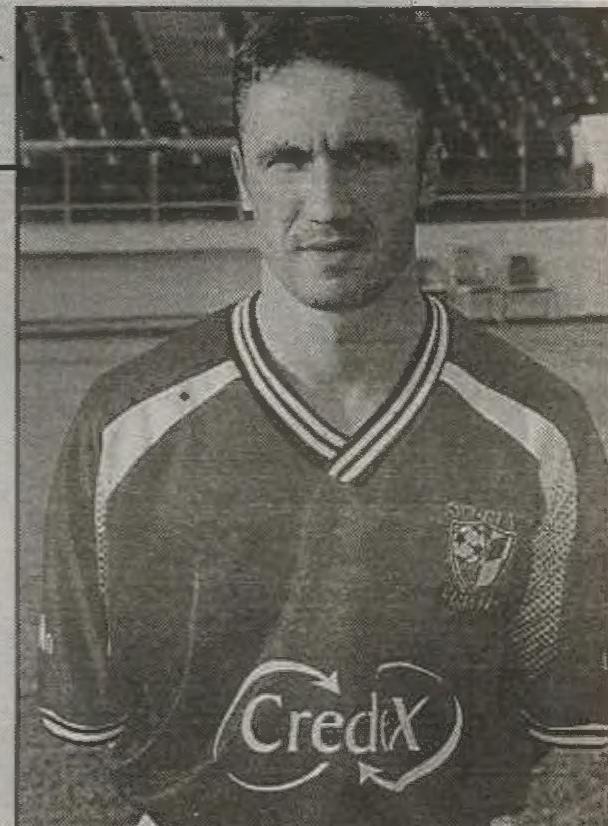
Alan Vest's Geylang Eagles got back on track with a convincing 3-0 away victory against Woodlands Wellington. Although the first 20 minutes was quite even, Geylang gradually got on top and went into the break leading 2-0.

Brian Bothwell was causing problems for the Woodlands defence, and set up the first goal with a fine header back to his striking partner Indra Shaden to blast into the net.

Geylang went on to dominate the second half, limiting Woodlands to long range efforts. Vest, who made a few positional changes, would have been much happier with his defence, which in recent weeks had looked a little shaky.

In the other match, Tampines came from two goals down to defeat Jurong 4-2.

In transfer news, rumour has it that Sydney United's gifted midfielder Aytec Genc has been approached by Jurong FC and could be signed within the next couple of weeks.



Card Update

PLAYERS:	Y	R	Tot
Che Bunce	8	2	10
Jacob Burns	9	1	10
Harry James	9	1	10
Jamie Hamwell	10	0	10
Manny Gotis	8	1	9
Lee Jones	8	1	9
Vince Savoca	8	1	9
Stuart McLaren	9	0	9
Gabriel Mendez	9	0	9
Andy Vargas	9	0	9
Walter Ardone	6	2	8
Troy Halpin	6	2	8
Lubomir Lapsansky	7	1	8
Goran Lozanovski	7	1	8
Nick Meredith	7	1	8
Aurelio Vidmar	7	1	8
Jason Vukadin	7	1	8
Danny Burt	8	0	8
Dean Fak	8	0	8
Chris Jackson	8	0	8

CLUBS:			
South Melbourne	68	6	74
Sydney Olympic	67	5	72
Canberra	64	7	71
Marconi	65	6	71
Auckland Kings	63	7	70
Parramatta Power	64	6	70
Sydney United	61	5	66
Melbourne Knights	56	7	63
Wollongong	57	4	61
Gippsland Falcons	55	3	58
Perth Glory	51	6	57
Adelaide City	54	3	57
Brisbane Strikers	54	2	56
Northern Spirit	43	4	47
Carlton	38	4	42
Newcastle	39	3	42
TOTAL	899	78	977

	Home	Away	Total
Yellows	403	496	899
Reds	29	49	78
Total	432	545	977

REFEREES:	G	Y	R	Aver
Mathew Breeze	29	113	14	4.4
Simon Micallef	28	9	86	3.7
Gerry Connolly	26	60	7	2.6
Brett Hugo	25	99	10	4.4
Con Diomis	25	114	8	4.9
Eddie Lennie	25	114	5	4.8
Mark Shield	25	106	9	4.6
Jeremy Blaney	19	43	3	2.4
David Dwight	12	43	3	3.8
Perry Mur	11	18	1	1.7
Derek Rugg	7	23	6	4.1
Brian Precious	6	29	3	5.3
Wayne Dade	6	33	2	5.8
Craig Zetter	3	6	1	2.3

Inside Soccer

End of an era at South?

On the form they showed in that marvellous come-from-behind 5-3 win at Carlton in the round 30 derby game South Melbourne will not suffer the indignity of equaling (or worse) Brisbane's all-time worst slump from champs in 1996/97 to an inglorious 12th place finish in the follow-up campaign.

Which is good, as the back to back NSL champs of 1998 and 1999 - as well as the heroic inaugural Aussie reps in the 2000 World Club Championships - deserve a more dignified fate than that.

Destined to be recalled as one of the best local club sides of the era it was with some sadness I watched Ange Postecoglou's team produce the classic win at Carlton, with the realisation that it might be the last time we see this current team conjuring up that sort of magic.

It was the kind of vintage performance we'd grown so accustomed to in recent years, yet has been so rare in 1999/2000. As always though, still worth waiting for.

Greg Blake

Soccer invaded the hallowed MCG turf on Tuesday April 18 when girls and boys aged between 5 and 10 took part in the Victorian Soccer Federation's free Crazy John's Soccer Superclinic.

There were approximately 800 people in attendance to meet and learn soccer skills from their favorite NSL stars, receive a showbag, and run on the famous "G" where the Australian Men's Olympic Football team will commence their campaign for 2000 Gold.

It was wonderful to see the Victorian Soccer Federation and the four Victorian NSL clubs join forces for the good of the game.

"It was a great opportunity for my son to learn from some of the stars of the game. They were fantastic with the kids, said Helen Fisher. "It was lots of fun," added four-year-old Joshua Fisher.

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Includes bag, ball, shin pads, cap, T-shirt, water bottle and more.

Read Inside Soccer next week

NSL TOP SCORERS

PABLO CARDOZO	18
(Sydney Olympic)	
MICHAEL CURCIJA	18
(South Melbourne)	
DAMIAN MORI	18
(Adelaide City Force)	
JOHN BUONAVOGGLIA(NB)	16
STUART YOUNG (WW)	16
SASO PETROVSKI(WW)	14
ZELJKO BABIC(MS)	13
CON BOUTSIANIS (PG)	13
ALISTAIR EDWARDS(PG)	13
ALEX MOREIRA (C)	13
CROWD COMPARISON:	
Cumulative to Round 29	
99/00: 1,251,121	
98/99: 1,180,745	



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Kingz' finals hopes ended by Zebs?

**FOOTBALL KINGZ 0
ADELAIDE CITY FORCE 2**

CPelosi 50, Vidmar 78.

Saturday night at North Harbour Stadium, Auckland. Crowd: 5,143.



MATCH STATS:



FOOTBALL KINGZ:
Duke; Jones, Hickey,
Van Steeden (Rufer
66); Perry (Middleby,
46), Jackson, Ngata,
Vicelich, Campbell
(Suri 46); de Jong, Silva.

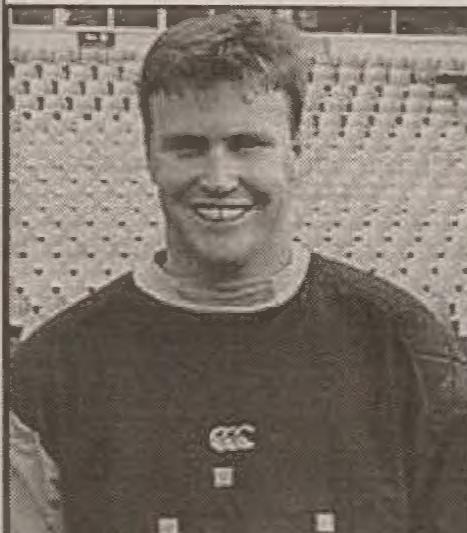


**ADELAIDE CITY
FORCE:** Cagalj;
Lagati, Costanzo, Tobin
(Kim 70); Hassell,
Kemp, Veart, Vidmar,
Sabljak; Mori, Pelosi
(Brain 90).

Yellows:
Kingz: C. Jackson (72), A. Silva (87),
L. Jones (87).
Force: A. Costanzo (90).

Best Players:
3. C. VEART (FORCE)
2. A. VIDMAR (FORCE)
1. W. RUFER (Kingz)

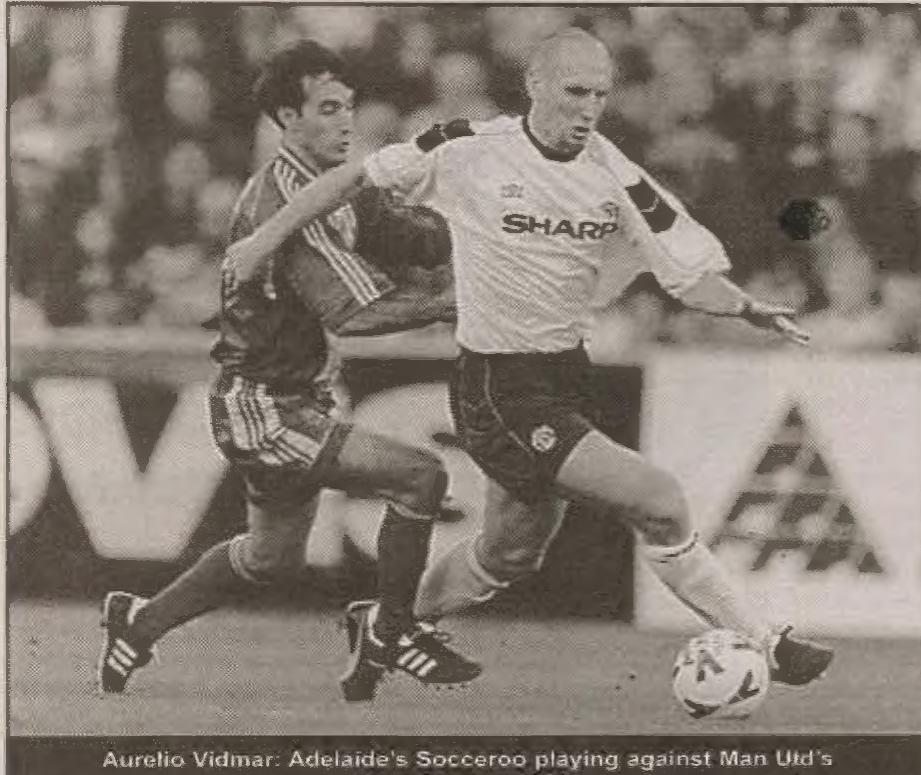
Referee: Brett Hugo



New Kingz goalkeeper Danny Duke (ex-Brisbane Strikers).

In the first half, a period during which they forced ten corners, Adelaide only forced Duke into action on just one occasion.

This incident took place in the 38th minute, when the custodian saved with his legs from Bradley Hassell, after a flowing move instigated by the outstanding Carl Veart, and continued by the lively Damian Mori, who cut in from the left before slipping the ball across for Claudio Pelosi. His shot was blocked by Riki Van Steeden, and Hassell was unable to con-



Aurelio Vidmar: Adelaide's Socceroo playing against Man Utd's Jaap Stam in 1999

By Jeremy Ruane

The well-organised, highly efficient footballing team that is Adelaide Force once again proved too strong for the Football Kingz at North Harbour Stadium, their 2-0 victory on April 22, while a repeat of the scoreline when the teams met at this venue just a month ago, this time all but ending any hopes the New Zealand side had of making the National Soccer League play-offs in their first season in the competition.

The visitors began the match well, but without giving Kingz keeper Daniel Duke any real causes for concern. Indeed, for all their plentiful possession and off-the-ball movement

vert the rebound due to Duke's efforts.

There were four other incidents when Adelaide came close to open the scoring during the first spell. Mori curled a twenty-five yard free-kick into the siderunning on the half hour, while the unmarked Aurelio Vidmar - another to excel for the visitors - should have done better five minutes later, heading over from close range after ghosting in on the blindside of the Kingz defence to meet a well-flighted Veart cross.

Both Veart and Nick Sabljak fired wide before the break for the visitors, who concluded the first half with a points advantage in boxing terms, but who could well have found themselves heading for the dressing rooms a goal in arrears of their hosts, who went into this match

level on points with Adelaide.

The Kingz best spell came in a ten minute spell leading up to the half-way point in the first half. Both Jeff Campbell and Ivan Vicelich went close with long-range efforts in the 22nd and 23rd minutes respectively, but the fit-again Fred de Jong went closer still ten minutes prior.

Latching onto Lee Jones' probing through ball, the striker deftly controlled the dropping ball and turned his marker, before prodding a shot just beyond Adrian Cagalj's left-hand upright from the edge of the penalty area, the goalkeeper diving in vain to his left.

While many in the 5,143-strong crowd were still coming to grips with the eyebrow-raising half-time substitutions of Campbell and Jonathan Perry, Adelaide took full advantage of their opponents' wayward concentration resulting from these changes to score the crucial opening goal.

Some non-existent tracking by the Kingz midfield was mercilessly punished by the visitors, with Mori's run through supplemented by Veart's forward surge, a darting run to which the home side had no answer. The former laid the ball into the path of the latter, whose clipped cross to the far post was met by the unmarked Pelosi - from five yards, Duke hadn't a prayer of stopping his header.

Rocked by this setback, the Kingz almost found themselves facing a mountain to climb against the league's meanest defence three minutes later. Mori careered through again, only for Duke to race off his line and clear the danger, albeit temporarily.

For his clearance went straight to Pelosi, who hammered the ball back over the 'keeper's head and towards the target. Jones' presence of mind in covering the gaping target was rewarded, however, the newly-shaven-headed defender able to clear off the line, and preserve the Kingz hopes of a fightback for the moment.

One battle the Kingz were definitely winning was the individual duel between Aaron Silva and Gianluca Lagati. The latter was often seen doing his best to examine the label on Silva's collar, an approach which the smaller striker didn't take to too kindly.

So on the two occasions when the opportunity presented itself, the close-marking defender was left writhing on the ground in agony, having been unceremoniously elbowed in that most tender of areas each time ... Ouch!

The introduction of Wynton Rufer brought some much-needed guile and craft to the Kingz play from the 66th minute, with an artful move featuring the player-coach, Jones and Chris Jackson taking place seven minutes later. De Jong's lay-off invited Batram Suri to let fly from twenty-five yards, and his drive sizzled over the crossbar.

But within five minutes, the Kingz play-off hopes plummeted, while those of Adelaide soared. After Duke had save a Vidmar drive, the visitors doubled their advantage twelve minutes from time with one of the softest goals you'll ever see.

While Mori lined up a free-kick, Vidmar drifted away to the left, and found himself in yards of space. Mori saw what was on, and quickly laid the ball into the path of his team-mate, who nonchalantly curled home the match-winner beyond Duke's despairing dive, as the bemused Kingz defence looked around at each other, the burning question of "Who was supposed to be marking him?" foremost in their minds.

The home team weren't yet done with, however, Rufer inspiring a couple of raids before the finish which saw de Jong twice going close, particularly in the 84th minute when, at full stretch, he just failed to do justice to a marvellous cross from the player-coach, who had beaten three players before



Carl Veart: outstanding display by the attacker-turned-defender.

delivering the sphere to the far post.

Rufer himself fired the Kingz final shot, a free-kick into the hands of Cagalj, while Mori just failed to convert a clipped cross from Vidmar, after the initial promptings of Sabljak.

The Kingz assistant coach, Shane Rufer, while not admitting that all hope seems lost re-making the play-offs, summed up the difference between his side and making same quite succinctly afterwards. "We lack nothing in terms of self-belief and match fitness. Our problem has been a lack of game intelligence.

"You need people who've been involved in the game, a couple of experienced heads who can take the initiative on the pitch, rather than look to the sidelines for guidance. But regardless of the final outcome, for our first season, we've come very close to making the top six."

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Kingz fight back



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Stallions' second half blitz destroys Glory

MARCONI STALLIONS 3

Gibson 50, Renaud 58, Zeljko Babic 73.

PERTH GLORY 2

Trajkovski 9, Milicevic 12.

Friday night at Marconi Stadium, Sydney. Crowd 5,721.



MATCH STATS



MARCONI STALLIONS: Turnbull, Kim, Babic, M., Longo, Invincible, Renaud, Gibson, Care (Di Gia 46), Zoric, Awaritefe (Farah 83), Babic Z (Trajanovski 79).



PERTH GLORY: Petkovic, Milicevic, Naven, Valle (Carbone 80), Trajkovski (Aflos 70), Miller, Wehrman, Junior, Edwards, Despotovski (Ergic 76), Aurelio.

Yellows:
Glory: Milicevic 30, Trajkovski 63.

BEST PLAYER:
3. GIBSON (STALLIONS)
2. Renaud (Stallions)
1. Kim (Stallions)

Referee: Matthew Breeze.

By John Vratic

Appropriate for the Easter long weekend Marconi rose from the dead in the second half of a pulsating top of the table clash on a perfect autumn Sydney evening to propel themselves to within one point of second placed Perth Glory.

Marconi was playing in dry conditions for the first time in twelve weeks and celebrated the occasion in style with two super, dare we say, world class, second half goals that got them back into the game after Perth had dominated the first period.

Glory put on a classy first half team performance and went into the break having scored two goals, including one from first time starter, 19 year old sweeper, Ljubo Milicevic.

But two thunderous volleys from Chad Gibson and Brendan Renaud got the home team back on an even keel and then Zeljko Babic continued his recent scoring spree by putting away another near post header to complete the turnaround.

Babic's goal was the sixth game in a row he has scored and brings his season tally to thirteen - his most prolific year, dwarfing his previous best effort of six goals.

The evening began in somewhat controversial circumstances with the omission of Marconi captain Brad Maloney. Having been on the bench last week Maloney was mysteriously excluded all together for this game.

Glory coach Bernd Stange pulled a surprise out of the hat himself when he selected young Milicevic to make his starting debut in place of the disgraced Hamilton Thorp. Captain Gareth Naven was moved from his normal sweeper position to accommodate the former



AIS captain - Naven had the unenviable task of marking the dangerous Babic.

Marconi started off well and had an early chance but the good crowd of just under six thousand went into subdued mode very early in the game with Glory turning on the style right from the start.

In the fourth minute a corner from the left found the head of Mark Babic whose well struck header beat Glory keeper Jason Petkovic but Scott Miller was guarding the left post and was perfectly positioned to head the goal bound header to safety.

Having fallen to their bogey team, Newcastle, last week, Glory set about continuing their own jinx over Marconi, to whom they had never lost, five minutes later.

A classy build up from the back saw Naven take the ball deep into the Marconi half and stroke a perfectly timed through ball to Bobby Despotovski inside the penalty box.

The striker pushed the ball forward with Marconi sweeper Pan Keun Kim speeding across to cover the unmarked Despotovski. Surprisingly Kim committed himself and attempted to slide tackle but mis-timed his challenge and collected the legs of the number ten who tumbled over to earn the visitors a penalty.

Right wing-back Robert Trajkovski was the designated penalty taker and duly converted, sending Michael Turnbull diving to the wrong side for an early 1-0 lead.

Worse was to follow very soon after.

In the 12th minute, an interchange between Despotovski and Alistair Edwards ended in a wicked Edwards cross that bounced dangerously across the Marconi goal before Danny Invincible headed it away for a corner.

Miller's corner kick from the right proved to be fatal. Turnbull, who has looked shaky in the last few weeks, was unable to grab hold of the ball and as it dropped to the ground Milicevic was nearest to it and promptly whacked it into the back of the net.

Only twelve minutes gone and a commanding 2-0 lead seemed to set Glory on the road to retain their unbeaten streak against the Stallions.

Glory continued to test the Marconi defence with both Trajkovski, on the right, and Despotovski posing plenty of problems for the home team but neither able to conjure up what would have been a killer third goal.

Marconi finally put together a dangerous move in the 32nd minute. Kim ventured forward and spotted Zeljko Babic free in the penalty box finding him with an accurate through ball.

Babic failed to control it first time and although he got to the ball the angle was too tight and his shot was easily saved.

Although Marconi had a couple of half chances soon after it was the visitors who should have put the game beyond doubt before the conclusion of the first half.

In the 38th minute Milicevic moved forward and played a splendid ball to Trajkovski lurking in an unaccustomed left wing location. He somehow beat Longo when there seemed to be no room to get around and sent over a right foot cross from right on the by-line.

With Despotovski looming Turnbull was able to get to the ball first and swat it away from the near post.

After an Aurelio shot was saved in the

41st minute the Brazilian should have scored Glory's third goal one minute later.

A one-two between Miller and Edwards produced a ground hugging Miller cross that swept past everyone to the waiting Aurelio with an empty goal staring at him from only five metres away. But inexplicably he failed to control the ball and it bounced off his leg over the Marconi goal line and out of harm's way.

The second half brought together what seemed to be two completely new teams, such was the change in the fortunes of the teams.

The change started as early as the 49th minute. Zoric fed Zeljko Babic on the left and the speedster slipped away from the defence only to blast a left foot shot high and wide.

But the crowd only had one minute to wait for the fireworks to begin.

An Invincible cross from the right was headed out by the Glory defence to the waiting Gibson about 23 metres out. Gibson adjusted his position to the bouncing ball and hit a first time screamer that flew into the top left hand of Petkovic's goal. It made the score 2-1 and another second half Marconi onslaught had started.

In the 58th minute Renaud (pictured left) thought he'd try to outdo Gibson's effort.

Another foul on Zeljko Babic on the left saw the free kick cleared out of the box via a Despotovski header. It reached Renaud just wide of the Perth left post - the Marconi left wing-back controlled it with his left foot, bounced it on his right thigh and then volleyed it with his left foot past a maze of players and an un-sighted and unmoved Petkovic.

After a close shave in the 59th minute when Zeljko Babic wasn't able to get in a clean shot when the ball bobbed about as he raced into the clear it wasn't long before Marconi registered their third goal.

In the 73rd minute Francis Awaritefe returned a pass to the overlapping Renaud who fired in a superb, curling cross to Babic advancing to the near post. The little forward timed his



Chad Gibson: world class goal in Marconi's stunning comeback victory over Glory.

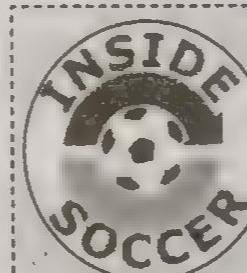
run perfectly and his downward header gave Petkovic no chance as it slid under his body.

Two minutes later it was that man Babic again. He was sent clear and as he cut across Milicevic he was clearly tripped, as was obvious to all except the referee and the linesman. Neither saw it as a foul and waved play on.

Glory finally woke up from its second half slumber in the last 15 minutes but could not penetrate the home defence although they came close six minutes into time added on.

A defensive clearance made it to Edgar about 25 metres from Turnbull's goal - the South American drove the ball back towards the goal where Turnbull fumbled the shot which rolled onto the left post and over the line but the referee whistled for an earlier infringement.

Soon after the referee blew the final whistle to end another epic second half performance by Marconi who were cheered off the field by their hard to please and normally passive supporters.



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Clark a big splash as Canberra cruise on the Coast

NORTHERN SPIRIT 1
R. Griffiths 55
CANBERRA COSMOS 2

Clark 36,57

Saturday night at North Power Stadium, Gosford. Crowd 10,214



MATCH STATS



NORTHERN SPIRIT: Van Stratten, Bingley, Rudan, Cunico, Enes, Slater (Moss 75), Lyons (Griffiths A 45), T. Cranney, S. Cranney (Synder 60), Griffiths R, Langdon.



CANBERRA COSMOS: Konstantinou, Milin (Hamilton 85), Popovich, Purdue (Hooker 66), Polak, Watkins, Castro, Arranz, James (De Jesus 73), Clark, Winnie.

Yellows:
Spirit: Slater 51, Langdon 58.
Cosmos: James 90.

Best Players:
3: LANGDON (SPIRIT)
2: Clark (Cosmos)
1: Popovich (Cosmos)

Referee: Mark Shield



Matt Langdon: the jewel in the Spirit crown this season.

By Arlo White

An opportunistic double strike from the highly versatile Andrew Clark was enough to snatch the spoils for the visiting Canberra Cosmos, as NSL action hit the Soccer-mad Central Coast for the first time ever on Saturday night.

On his previous visit to Sydney two weeks ago Clark was handed the unenviable task of shackling Olympic power Brett Emerton, yet after his Belmore show of discipline and self-denial that would have Tibetan monks nodding in admiration, Clark displayed a totally new dimension to his game with a coolly taken match-winning brace.

And what an occasion to shine. Spirit's decision to head up to Gosford was fully vindicated with a healthy and boisterous 10,000 turn out in the splendid North Power stadium, a gate that will surely fuel the imagination of Spirit supremo Remo Nogarotto as he plots the future direction of North Sydney's finest.

With a top six finish a distant and painful memory, Spirit boss Graham Arnold unleashed his young guns on the Cosmos, most notably 18-year-old Central Coast lad Jess Van Stratten, taking his place between the sticks for his Spirit debut in front of his home fans.

Spirit began the game with plenty of purpose - young star Matthew Langdon enjoying the freedom of the park down the left flank, and such was his uncurtailed influence early on, the press box was rife with speculation that he'd somehow contracted a contagious disease.

For all Langdon's promise and promptings however, clear openings were preciously few and far between in the opening stages, and despite the quality of crosses that were purring off his cultured left peg, neither Ryan Griffiths or strike partner Sean Cranney were able to get in amongst it in the danger areas.

Canberra though, to their enormous credit, were hardly showing signs of a side thumped so humiliatingly in front of their own fans by rampant Wollongong last week, and with a mixture of resolute defending and Castro, James and wide man Arranz all looking comfortable on the ball, they were proving a tough nut for the Spirit to crack.

Spirit were being increasingly forced into long range efforts by Canberra's shape and tenacity, but on 21 minutes Robert Enes beat the always available Langdon to the ball 30 yards out, and his rasping drive looked a sure bet for the opener before smacking the top of a mightily relieved Konstantinou's cross-bar.

Suddenly the action was livening up. A teasing Langdon center, this time from the right, found a surging Shane Lyons powering into the box, and only alert goalkeeping from Konstantinou prevented a glancing header finding the net. From his resulting hoof up field Canberra almost snatched to lead when Van Stratten was forced from his area to clear, but his header only found Daniel Watkins, whose tame chip was eagerly gathered by the retreating debutant.

On 36 minutes the noisy Coast fans were silenced as Canberra took the lead with a fine move. Watkins found David Arranz wide on the left and his excellent centre was perfect for Clark to power in a goal bound header. Van Stratten saved magnificently only to see the alert Clark stab home the rebound for the opener.

After a period of sustained Spirit pressure after the break, Troy Cranney's 56th minute centre was headed down by Bingley at the back post for a gleeful Ryan Griffiths to scoop into the roof of the net from four yards



Local boy Jess Van Stratten made his debut for Spirit in front of a home crowd.

out to level matters.

Any thoughts of a Spirit surge though, were soon placed on the back burner as amazingly, Canberra regained the lead inside two minutes. After a wasteful set piece from Enes; Arranz pounced for the Cosmos and his beautifully threaded through ball found Clark all alone in the penalty area and he made no mistake with a low strike inside Van Stratten's right hand post.

With a delighted Canberra packing the defensive areas a Spirit leveler was looking increasingly unlikely until, you guessed it, little Langdon skipped over four challenges enroute for the penalty area, only to see his effort bounce to safety off the post.

The closest Spirit came to equalizing was with just two minutes remaining, and for a split second we could have been watching an episode of the Keystone Cops.



Toplica Popovich: a good organiser at the back for Cosmos.

Spirit's Central Coast venture a success



Comment by Aidan Ormond

The result of this game was never going to be of much importance. The real interest for Northern Spirit was in testing an extension of their northern beaches fan-base and taking Spirit, the brand name, to another soccer market, the Central Coast.

Overall, I think this exercise was a success despite the loss to Cosmos.

Why? Firstly over 10,000 fans was, as Graham Arnold pointed out later, about 7,000 more than they could have expected if this game, a meaningless mid-table encounter, was played at North Sydney.

The atmosphere, on a chilly night, was good, with the fans in fine voice, albeit a little quiet at first. There appeared to be a wide cross-section of mainstream supporters lapping up the facilities, which included, significantly for Spirit, excellent corporate boxes (something North Sydney clearly lacks).

And for many, this was the first time a Spirit home game did not involve a trip down

the expressway to Sydney.

Second, the North Power Stadium is magnificent. The \$24 million facility, towering high as you roll down the hill entering Gosford, does not have a bad viewing seat and has a surface as good as any in the NSL.

Here's what some fans and corporate box holders said about Spirit's Central Coast venture.

1: "It's a magnificent venue but coming from Sydney we would prefer them to stay in Sydney. I don't mind coming up for the odd game but not every one."

2: "Brookvale Oval would be my choice if we move from North Sydney. You are closer to the action and there are good corporate facilities."

3: "The stadium is great. We're locals but we go down to Sydney to support Spirit and my son plays for them at junior level. We've never been here before but we'll be back. We really want them to play here more often. There's 8,000 junior soccer players on the Coast and I reckon about 75% barrack for the Spirit. They should come and pay their respects to us more, maybe one home game a month. How many of us go to Sydney to support them?"

4: "I barrack for Spirit 100% and it's a great honour to see them herb. I used to barrack for Marconi but as soon as Spirit began I started supporting them, and I live on the Central Coast."

5: "Their coaching clinic this week was great."

6: "I have to get up really early to go to work so I can finish in time to get here, so it's a little inconvenient. If only this stadium could be transplanted over North Sydney Oval!"

After two powerful Spirit efforts had been repelled, it was left to David Winnie to boot clear off his own line after the original clearance had rebounded goalward off a Cosmos rear end. After such a sterling defensive effort, a goal like that would have been unfair for the gallant boys from ACT.

A clearly dejected Arnold appeared after the match, this result simply the latest in a string of inconsistency. Yet on a positive note, he was full of praise for the Central Coast experiment, "It was great," he enthused, "There was a good atmosphere, a great night to play Football, and a great Stadium."

"We'll be up here a couple of times a year for sure, even with nothing to play for for both teams a crowd like that turns up, so if we're in the top six we'd nearly fill it."

Roberts' red card puts Breakers on back foot



NEWCASTLE BREAKERS 0 CARLTON 0

Saturday night at Breakers Stadium, Newcastle. Crowd: 5,735.

MATCH STATS:



NEWCASTLE BREAKERS: Catlin, Pryce, Roberts, Sprod, Dodd (Smith 61), Wilson (Tancheski 85), Buonavoglia, Owens (Wieczorek 62), Ferguson, Harper, Moore.



CARLTON: Anastasiadis, McPherson, Colosimo, Douglas (Deans 87), Marth, Atkinson, Moreira (Packer 60), Lapsansky, Thompson, Markovski, Horvat.

Yellows:

Breakers: Roberts 18, Buonavoglia 30. Carlton: Lapsansky 64, Markovski 94.

Red Cards:

Breakers: Roberts 36

Best Players:

3. GLENN SPROD (BREAKERS)
2. Andy Harper (Breakers)
1. Simon Colosimo (Carlton)

Referee: Eddie Lennie

and throughout the year suggests the veteran has plenty of games left in him yet.

This was a game that both teams would have liked to win if they were to push for a top two position while at the same time keeping the marauding Adelaide City from snapping at their heels.

However, at the end, it was the Breakers who would have come out the happiest after playing almost a full hour with ten players when Andy Roberts was marched for a second yellow card offence.

As has been the case many times this year the Breakers defence, which included debutant Ferguson, defended stoically all game as Carlton found it impossible to pierce the steel of the Newcastle back line.

While defending constantly Newcastle also had their chances on the break with the dynamic duo of Harper and Johnny Buonavoglia causing their own problems on the large and cumbersome Carlton defence.

Despite the Breakers doing it all year, this journalist has not seen a game this year where Newcastle had to defend so much. Yet analysing the statistics, the number of genuine chances were fairly even between both sides, and the Breakers could have even come away with three points had Lennie not made such a profound impact on the game.

Carlton applied the squeeze on Newcastle from the first minute of the match. It was as early as the fourth minute that Carlton was creating chances. John Markovski easily beat Ferguson on the left in what ended up being Ferguson's only error.

Simon Colosimo met Markovski's cross and his thunderous half volley was drilled into Andy Roberts who was defending the goal line.

Newcastle countered in the 11th minute when young sensation Greg Owens glided past four Carlton players. His shot from just outside the box with the outside of his right foot was well saved by keeper Dean Anastasiadis diving low to his left.

The referee did not want to be forgotten in this energetic start when he amazingly booked Andy Roberts for backing into a Carlton player. Roberts' action was neither malicious nor deliberate and all were stumped to see the yellow card come out.

Twenty-six minutes had gone by and Carlton created another golden opportunity when Andrew Marth, normally so reliable with his heading, squandered an inch perfect cross from Archie Thompson.

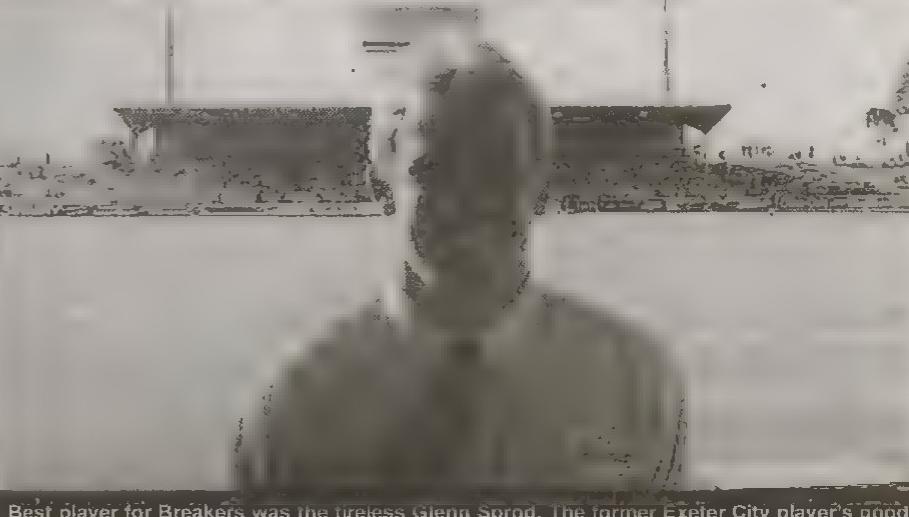
The Breakers hit back again three minutes later when Mark Wilson put a clever through ball to Harper on the left. Harper ran at the Carlton defence and his shot shaved the outside of the left-hand post.

A minute later Lennie again threw his hands up to be noticed.

Buonavoglia ran clear of the Carlton defence and headed towards goal. "Jockey" was set to shoot when Steve Horvat came through and collected Buonavoglia from behind in what can only be described as a terrible tackle. To everyone's amazement Lennie waved penalty claims away and proceeded to card Buonavoglia for diving.

Why Buonavoglia would dive when he had such an open chance for goal shows the lack of common sense in many of our referees today?

Carlton coach Stuart Munro later stated



Best player for Breakers was the tireless Glenn Sprod. The former Exeter City player's good form going into the finals will be vital for Breakers.

that he was certain it was a penalty from where he was sitting.

Six minutes later the Breakers' night turned disastrous when Lennie carded Roberts for a rough tackle on Andrew Marth. Again, this tackle was more clumsy than malicious. The Breakers then had no choice but try and play defensively and see if they could pinch a goal. Harper was moved back to the midfield in a sterling display all game leaving Buonavoglia the "lone ranger" up front.

In the 41st minute Marth had another heading opportunity after a spectacular overhead kick from Alex Moreira located him, however keeper Bob Catlin was on hand to tip the shot over the bar.

The Breakers nearly came into the half leading as a Glenin Sprod diving header was neatly tipped over by Anastasiadis. Sprod's header came after Buonavoglia beat three Carlton players on the right. He jinked towards goal and flicked the ball out to Travis Dodd on the left. Dodd's swinging cross was met perfectly by Sprod.

Newcastle came back from the orange break with some purpose with both Dodd and Owens creating some half-chances. However, Carlton was becoming increasingly frustrated as was demonstrated by Lubo Lapsansky's wild shot from forty yards.

The incessant whistle blowing of Lennie who seemed to take pity on Newcastle also hampered Carlton's rhythm - many would say trying to even the game up, and give Newcastle every marginal decision. This led to even further Carlton frustration and Markovski being booked for dissent.

Carlton finished in a flurry with opportunities from Thompson and a thunderous free kick

from Markovski, but as ever Catlin was hand to deny them the three points.

Breakers' coach Lee Sterry was generally pleased with the result. "You play a side that is sixth spot. They are a quality side Carlton and you have to hang on to what you've got."

"We were down to ten men and I have don't have a problem with Robbo's (Andy Roberts) send off, but the decision before that og Jockey - if that wasn't a penalty then I'm not breathing air."

"Overall our refereeing this year hasn't been too bad. I haven't had Eddie Lennie in two years... his performance tonight I thought was quite ordinary for both teams."

"Sproddy (Glenn Sprod) put a tackle on Colosimo earlier in the game that was one hundred percent yellow and Robbo gets a soft one five minutes later and gets a yellow card."

"It was gutsy performance anyway."

Carlton mentor Munro was disappointed with the draw. "It's hard to play a team that has ten men, and you take a team like Newcastle who are a solid defensive unit right through the whole team from back to front."

"I'm disappointed really. We started the game really well and could have been in front early, but that's neither here nor there. I agree with Lee about the referee."

"My first impression, and I don't have a video, was that it was a penalty. We never really showed any quality."

"People keep talking about us as a quality side and it's times like this we should stand up and show the quality."

"Obviously you are going to have territorial advantage but you have to do something with it."



By Michael Kmet

It was a celebration of the new and the old at Breakers Stadium as Andy Harper was making his 300th NSL appearance and stopper Josh Ferguson was making his NSL debut for Newcastle. It should also have been a celebration of football between two of the National League's leading lights but referee Eddie Lennie, supposedly Australia's finest, destroyed all hopes of a quality encounter with some bizarre decisions in the first half and his reluctance to let the game flow in the second half.

Before the match Harper was presented with a plaque for his milestone by Soccerco coach Frank Farina. Harper's form in this game

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Chi Chi's return signals an Olympic revival?

SYDNEY OLYMPIC 2

Mendez 55, Cardozo 86.

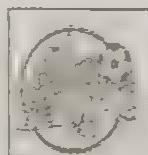
PARRAMATTA POWER 1

Sterjovski 23.

Saturday night at Belmore Sports Ground, Sydney. Crowd 3,841.



MATCH STATS:



SYDNEY OLYMPIC: Perosh, Thomas, Tsekenis, Arambasic (Mendez 45), Cardozo, Emerton, Sinozic, Wilson, Goutzioulis, Kohler, Marusic (Zorbas 74).



PARRAMATTA POWER: Crews, Barrett, Eagleton, Ardome (Gibson 71), Sterjovski (Taliadoros 79), Griffiths, Berry (Bennett 57), Laybutt, Byrnes, Elrich, Burns.

Yellows:

Olympic: Sebastian Sinozic 31, Paul Kohler 68, Gabriel Mendez 87.
Power: Walter Ardome 15, Jacob Burns 35.

Best Players:

3. PABLO CARDOZO (Olympic)
2. Mark Bynes (Power)
1. Gabriel Mendez (Olympic.)

Referee: Gerry Connolly



His future's so bright, he's gotta wear shades!
Olympic's Pablo Cardozo.

By Ben Cubby

A courageous second-half fightback earned Sydney Olympic a rousing 2-1 victory over Parramatta Power at Belmore Sportsground on Saturday night.

Mile Sterjovski had given Parramatta a convincing 1-0 lead at the break, but the return of Gabriel Mendez, absent with injury since March 14th, inspired Olympic to a memorable, last ditch win.

Mendez (main picture) came on at half-time, scored the 55th minute equaliser and sparked his team out of their five game winless streak.

Man-of-the-match Pablo Cardozo notched the winner four minutes from full time, curling an unstoppable 25-yard free kick past Andrew Crews and into the top corner of the net.

What a goal - what a player!

A modest holiday crowd turned up at Belmore on a very crisp autumn evening and saw the match kick off at a frenetic pace.

Most of the early action was played out down the flanks. Parramatta's teenage fullback Ahmad Elrich continued his recent good form, combining effectively with Walter Ardome and fellow defender Dave Barrett.

Olympic's Brett Emerton, as is his wont, looked sharp on the opposite side of the pitch. His battle with tenacious Power defender Steve Eagleton was a constant feature of the match.

Zlatko Arambasic got into a number of threatening positions for Olympic in the first half, although he usually found either Barrett or Socceroo Steve Laybutt barring his path.

His best effort was a low shot on the turn that skidded dangerously across the face of goal after 13 minutes.

Olympic keeper John Perosh raced off his line to block Elrich's shot in the 22nd, and then raced back again to tip Sterjovski's follow up out for a corner.

Jacob Burns found Joel Griffiths with the resulting cross, and the young striker headed the ball on to his partner Mile Sterjovski, who was lurking at the far post.

Sterjovski, who was played onside by an Olympic defender on the goal line, made it 1-0 with a simple header.

Scything forward runs by Cardozo, Emerton and George Goutzioulis gave Olympic some momentum after the goal, but composed defending from Laybutt and Mark Bynes usually snuffed out their forays.

Olympic's best chance of the half came in the 28th minute after Cardozo was shoved over by Barrett on the edge of the penalty box.

The striker lashed a shot just wide before the referee had blown his whistle, and was ordered to retake it. At the second attempt he hit it sweetly and the unsighted Crews did fabulously well to tip his stinging drive around the post.

Parramatta held the upper hand for the remainder of the first half.

Elrich, Ardome and Jacob Burns ruled the midfield with a nice balance of speed and first touch control.

Burns nearly doubled the lead a minute before half time, but he fired just wide of the left-hand upright after a neat build-up involving Steve Berry and Joel Griffiths.

Branko Culina withdrew the fading Arambasic during the break in favour of Mendez. The switch allowed Emerton to move into an out-and-out striking role alongside Cardozo, with Mendez tucked in just behind.

The move reaped immediate dividends, as the trio left Parramatta's backline standing on several occasions in the first minutes of the half.

A poor Crews clearance created the equalising goal. The keeper booted a back-pass straight to the feet of Cardozo, who fed the ball out to Marusic on the left.

Marusic, who had had a pretty dormant game up to this point, suddenly came alive and lanced in a powerful low cross from the left. Mendez

sprinted unmarked into the 6-yard box and ladled the ball past Crews to make it 1-1.

Power's Dave Mitchell sent on Peter Bennett to mark Mendez soon after the goal, but the will-o-the-wisp playmaker continued to weave his magic.

Mendez drew a fine save from Crews in the 75th, after scintillating lead-up play from Cardozo, Emerton and Pete Zorbas.

A slide-rule pass from the born-again substitute released Emerton a minute later, but Crews did enough to make the Olyroo captain shoot wide in a one-on-one situation.

To their credit, Parramatta absorbed a great deal of Olympic pressure without wilting, and gradually they began to regain an even share of the match.

Substitute John Gibson showed his pedigree with a couple of accurate long range shots



that brought the best out of Perosh.

Mark Bynes went on a jinking run in the 80th minute, but Sterjovski couldn't quite find the finishing touch to match the glittering build-up play.

Despite some superb, slide-rule passes from Mendez, the game looked headed for a stalemate until Cardozo was knocked over 25 yards out from goal in the 86th minute.

His dazzling set-piece goal brought scenes of real joy to the pitch and the terraces - it was like the lifting of a gypsy's curse.

As Branko Culina commented afterwards: "sometimes it takes one player to do something brilliant, and that changes everything."

There was time for Emerton to squander another one-on-one chance with Crews before Gerry Connolly blew the final whistle on a long-overdue Olympic win.

With the return of Mendez, the home side looked more like the team that lead the competition for so many weeks.

Cardozo was the difference between the two sides, though. His sharpness in and around the Power penalty box, coupled with the fact that he rarely if ever gave the ball away, made him the star on the night.

Solid performances from Scott Thomas,

Peter Tsekenis, Emerton and Paul Kohler also contributed heavily to the result.

For the visitors, Mark Bynes again showed his class - it's hard to believe that he's still technically a youth league player.

Major find Ahmad Elrich, hard-working Joel Griffiths and the steady Steve Laybutt were the other standouts for Parramatta.

When asked if he thought his team was out of finals contention, Power boss Dave Mitchell said "I think so. We'll still fight it out, but our chances are slim."

"We're playing well, but we're coping too many goals. We're a good side, but we're not there yet. We don't have a player like Cardozo, or Mendez, who can put in the free kick."

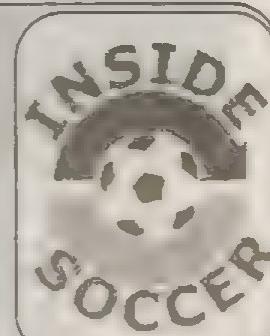
Culina said of Mendez: "he's very important to us. The way we play, we need a ball player."

"Marusic wasn't really involved, but then he's not been playing on a regular basis in Belgium."

"One player that did do well was Paul Kohler - he battled away in the midfield, he was terrific."

"The three points are vital to us at this stage."

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Fright night! Strikers put scare in Wolves camp

WOLLONGONG WOLVES 2

Petrovski 17, 57.

BRISBANE STRIKERS 2

North 85, Foster 85.

Saturday night at Brandon Park, Wollongong. Crowd: 5,253.



MATCH STATS:



WOLLONGONG WOLVES:

Pogliacomi, Ceccoli, Stanton, Cervinski, Horsley, Young (Masi 74), Chipperfield, Spencer Petrovski, Robertson (Reid 74), Mennillo, (Huxley 91), Mennillo.



BRISBANE STRIKERS:

Bolton, Gwynne, Stefanutto, Foster, Srhoj, Hews (Miner 74), Dwyer (Pilic 63), McLaren North, Grierson, McKain (Webber 74).

Yellows:

Strikers: McLaren

Best Players:

3. CECCOLI (WOLLONGONG)
2. Cervinski (Wollongong)
1. Grierson (Brisbane)

Referee: Simon Micallef

By Stephen Webb

Wollongong increased their lead over Perth Glory and broke the record for the number goals scored in an NSL season by playing what many observers thought was their worst game all year.

Brisbane coach John Kosmina thought his team had given Wolves a football lesson. In truth, Brisbane were ordinary. It's just that, unlike Wollongong, they made an effort to play football.

Two fortunate goals for Saso Petrovski belied Wolves' woeful performance.

But a soft goal by Jade North and a welcome return to the scorers' list by Paul Foster will probably not be enough to extend Brisbane's season beyond Round 34.

In the opening minutes Wollongong looked more or less their normal selves and seemed to be faster onto the ball.

Shane Stefanutto lost out to Matt Horsley on one of the Wollongong skipper's raids down the right but Stefanutto was soon attacking, too, down the line and hitting a cross which Les Pogliacomi came out to collect.

Robbie Stanton hit a nice ball for Dino Mennillo, David Cervinski made a timely defensive back pass, and Chay Hews made an important intercept (it soon became apparent that either Brisbane were well-briefed on how to intercept Wollongong passes or the Wolves were being very sloppy).

In the tenth minute a Mennillo corner looked to be drifting in but it was cleared to Noel Spencer whose shot from the edge of the penalty area was blocked well away from goal.

Peter Dwyer drew out some good covering work from Alvin Ceccoli and a header in defence from Horsley. In the 13th minute Peter Grierson hit a free kick from 30 metres solidly into Pogliacomi's arms.

Wolves seemed comfortable in defence but were not connecting with one another up

front

Petrovski did connect his head to a ball from Stuart Young in the 17th minute. With Brisbane keeper Clint Bolton well off his line the ball lobbed into an open goal.

A bad sign for Wolves fans came in the 21st minute. Even with a great many red shirts back, Foster had a free header on a cross into the Wollongong penalty area. It was on target but, thankfully for Pogliacomi, hardly fierce.

While Brisbane were beginning to look enterprising - with Gnerson frequently testing his options - Wollongong were hitting long balls forward for Young to chase. And Young, despite bagging four goals the previous week, is not one of Wollongong's most renowned chasers.

In the 27th minute it took a brave punch from Pogliacomi off the toe of North, in the clear on the end of a Foster cross, to deny a very good chance for Brisbane.

In the 34th minute a Scott Chipperfield cross found Horsley's head in front of goal, but it fell tamely for Brisbane to clear.

And two minutes later, at the other end, a Brisbane header - on the end of a free kick conceded by Horsley - was hit firmly but straight at the Wolves' keeper.

The question at this point was how could a team be playing so badly and still be winning? A host of usually dependable players - Young, Ceccoli, Horsley, Spencer and more - were giving the ball away, putting it out when under no pressure, or knocking it aimlessly upfield.

Ceccoli was having his moments, however, playing intelligently out of defence. And Mark Robertson did the same in the 43rd minute, in a move that eventually sent Chipperfield on a probing run.

As the half came to a close Cervinski crossed from right midfield to Young who headed down for Chipperfield who whacked the ball well over the crossbar.

In the opening minutes of the second half Brisbane's shooting continued with only Stanton's scrambled clearance off the line preventing an equaliser.

Wolves on the break, however, got in a shot of their own, with a Chipperfield effort being fended away by Bolton.

Then Jon McKain and North worked well together down the right, with Chipperfield having to come back and clean up.

It was Chipperfield's pace in the 57th minute that led to Petrovski's second goal and the NSL record. Chipperfield tore through the Brisbane midfield and put the ball left to Petrovski whose shot was pushed off the post by Bolton.

From the corner Petrovski had another shot, Bolton struggled to get a hand to it and the ball rolled into the net.

The goal, however, was against the run of play. The game in the second half had mostly been played in Wolves' territory.

In the 70th minute, from 30 metres out following a Grierson free kick, Wayne Srhoj hit the Wollongong upright with Pogliacomi beaten.

Glenn Gwynne intercepted a pass from Young, McLaren tackled well on Chipperfield breaking down the left and, for Wolves, Ceccoli ruined the prospects of a chance for Foster and Miner.

In the 76th minute a Brisbane corner was cleared but a subsequent shot from outside the area was deflected through to Pogliacomi.

Robertson put a long ball wide for Horsley who crossed in to Petrovski with nowhere to go.

In the 79th minute, a solitary pitch invad-



Two goals from the voracious Saso Petrovski was one of the few positives for Wollongong.

er briefly disrupted the match.

Paul Reid looked sharp when he came on with Esala Masi late in the game and Ceccoli became more prominent with sensible balls out defence and up the left sideline.

Petrovski had a shot, high from a sharp angle on the right. Robertson put a good ball to Chipperfield in the Brisbane penalty area. Ceccoli made an important clearance and Pogliacomi took a couple of high catches near his line under pressure from Foster.

Grierson was doing well against Chipperfield.

Wolves were lacking lustre and could only get flustered when Brisbane started to shine.

In the 85th minute North latched onto a miserable back pass from Horsley and easily slotted Brisbane's first goal past Pogliacomi.

Ten minutes later, in the lengthy time added on, David Pilic took a free kick from the right and Foster headed in another.

Wolves panicked some more and pushed the ball forward but newcomer Adam Webber was cool in defence and set up another Brisbane attack with a ball through to Foster.

The second half ended with Brisbane again having more shots on target while limiting Wollongong to barely four shots altogether.

After the match the unofficial words of a Wollongong club official, "What a load of crap!", were officially echoed by coach Nick Theodorakopoulos: "It was worse than disappointing ... We played utter garbage tonight."

He fumed, "I wouldn't say they were over-confident; I'd say they were plain hopeless."

He said there was an overall lack of intensity, Brisbane didn't let Wollongong play and "it was just terrible".

Kosmina, similarly, was not happy with the point his team had won. He thought Brisbane conceded even softer goals than did Wollongong.

"Luck wasn't on our side," he said. "It could have been a different game altogether."

He was pleased with the performance of many of his players, particularly the youngsters making their NSL debuts toward the end of the match.

And he could only agree when Theodorakopoulos said, "We knew at half time

we shouldn't have been leading. We should have lost the game by a couple of goals."

Of Wollongong's scoring achievement, Theodorakopoulos said, "It's good to have a positive record like that but we're in the league to win the championship."

With Parramatta, Perth and Carlton ahead - and more serious business beyond - Wolves have to prove that statistics don't matter.

They have to prove that they aren't just good at thrashing easy beats. They have to prove, against the percentages, that they are able to get on top of quality as well.

Studs Up

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really
need a
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Falcons finally find a way to goal



GIPPSLAND FALCONS 3

Vargas pen 28, 72 Hutchinson 33.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS 2

Kelic 14, Urlovic 85.

Saturday night at Mobil Park, Morwell. Crowd: 2,137.

MATCH STATS:



GIPPSLAND FALCONS:
Jevdjevic - Fak - Gotis -
Savage - Katz - Puca (Sekulovski 68 min)-
Hutchinson - Vargas A.A.
- Bell - Nilo (Mandic 90
min) - MacNicol Sub not used:
Robertson



**MELBOURNE
KNIGHTS:** Acevski -
Rajher - Kovacevic -
Abbas (Magdic 59 min) -
Vargas R. - Nastevski -
Zolt (Rados 75 min)-
Kiratzoglou - Pelikan (Urlovic 68 min)
- Kelic - Cervinski.

Yellow cards

Falcons: Gotis 35min, Vargas 75min.
Knights: Abbas 57 min.

Best players

3. VARGAS A. (FALCONS)
2. Mac Nicol (Falcons)
1. Savage (FALCONS)

Referee: Jeremy Blaney

dence after an impressive 4-0 victory over the Kingz

In cool conditions the Knights settled the better and looked the more impressive going forward through the efforts of their captain Kovacevic and new import Zolt.

The first strike on goal coming in the third minute when a good run and long range shot by Anthony Pelikan went just over the Falcons goal.

The early pressure by the Knights unsettled the Falcons defence and lead to the first goal when a clumsy attempted clearance by Manny Gotis was pounced on by the experienced Ivan Kelic. Kelic turned his man on the edge of the box and slotted a well-placed shot into the back of the net. 1-0 Melbourne Knights.

The Falcons responded immediately with Dean Fak in the 15 minute having a strong header well saved by Acevski in the Knights goal and then Juan Nilo just missing with a glancing near post header in the 20 minute.

The Falcons pressure paid dividends in the 28 minute when the Knights failed to clear the ball from their penalty area and Clayton Bell was tripped, earning a clear cut penalty. Andy Vargas calmly slotting the ball beyond the diving Acevski. 1-1.

The Falcons were now clearly on top and dictating play through the midfield. Andy Vargas

The Knights rallied towards the end of the half with a good effort by Adrian Cervinski from the edge of the box well saved by Djedjevic in the Falcons goal.

The second half began with both sides continuing with their refreshing attacking play and the first chance falling to the hard working Juan Nilo after good lead up play by Brian MacNicol on the right. A teasing run and cut back found Nilo in space; his shot well block in the last line of defence.

The Knights were giving as good as they were getting, with Dragi Nastevski instrumental in most of their attacking moves.

A mis-placed back pass by Robbie Puca in the 60 minutes was scrambled away by Jevdjevic only as far as Nastevski whose powerful drive from a tight angle was well smothered by Jevdjevic having a solid game in the Falcons goal.

Jevdjevic was again called into action when a great cross by Zolt was met by Zelic, only to have his shot well saved down low.

The third goal to the Falcons was a classic by man-of-the-match Andy Vargas. Vargas collected the ball on the half way line and proceeded to beat four Knights defenders before slotting a perfectly placed low shot into the bottom corner of the goal. 3-1 Gippsland Falcons.

The Falcons were suddenly playing with confidence that had been missing for several months and a party piece move in the 75 minute could have almost extended their lead. Great link up play and one-two's between Sekulovski, Nilo and MacNicol opened the Knights defence with Sekulovski having only the keeper to beat. His shot well save by Acevski, keeping the Knights in the match.

The Knights lifted in the latter stages of the match with a well-taken goal by substitute Paul Urlovic in the 85 minute. A near post corner and perfectly timed glancing header by



The majestic Andy Vargas. The former Carlton midfielder was the star of the show for Gippsland.

Urlovic left Jevdjevic and the Falcons defenders star gazing as the ball hit the back of the net. 3-2 Gippsland Falcons.

The final minutes saw both sides with chances to increase their goal tally but the final result was a well deserved victory to a gallant Falcons who played with confidence and flair that has been missing in recent home performances.

Man of the match was midfield playmaker Andy Vargas for the Falcons. His ball control, passing and skills a delight to watch and his second goal one of the best seen at Mobil Park.

Brian MacNicol played one of his best games of the season in his more suited wide position. His speed and teasing runs were a constant headache to the Knights defenders and a primary reason the Falcons came out victorious.

Adrian Savage in the last line of defence for the Falcons, showed great speed, passion and commitment to keep the Falcons in the game when the Knights turned up the pressure.



Brian MacNicol: one of the NSL's most underrated players.

By Lucio Viggiano

In an entertaining encounter at Mobil Park on Saturday evening, the Gippsland Falcons recorded their first victory in ten weeks against one of the form sides in the competition.

The Falcons entered the match yet again without their injured inspirational captain and leader Mehmed Durakov. The Knights on the other hand came into the game high in confi-

and Clayton Bell linking well with MacNicol and Nilo causing real concerns for the Knights defenders with their pace.

The Falcons took a well-deserved lead in the 33 minute when one of many MacNicol runs down the left drew a corner. A well-rehearsed move saw a deep corner to the edge of the box well met by John Hutchinson with a strong header, which caught Acevski unsighted, and the Knights defenders flat footed. 2-1 Gippsland Falcons.

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SOUTH MELBOURNE 1

Kupresak og 54.

SYDNEY UNITED 0

Saturday night at Bob Jane Stadium, Melbourne. Crowd 4,126.



MATCH STATS



SOUTH MELBOURNE:
Jones, Liparoti, Orlc, Iosifidis, Lozanovski, Panopoulos, Tsekinis (Trimboli 79), De Amicis (c), Magnacca (Culibrk 87), Anastasiadis (Coveny 69), Curcija.



SYDNEY UNITED:
Hughes, Kupresak (c), Bosnar, Palapanis, Rastall (Deur 89), Moric, Arrate, Maric, Genc (Vsljebrka 88), Podeljak, Boševski (Pellegrino 72).

Yellows:

United: Maric (55), Palapanis (89), Bosnar (94+).

BEST PLAYER:

3. TSEKINIS (SMELB)
2. Bosnar (SUnited)
1. Iosifidis (SMelb)

Referee: Perry Mur.



Steve Iosifidis: a quality display by the player rumoured to be at Glory next year.

By Alan Clark

Sydney United captain Vellimir Kupresak turned into his own net a ball sent across goal from Goran Lozanovski nine minutes into the second half, for what proved to be the only goal of the game, giving South Melbourne a victory at Bob Jane on Saturday evening.

Lozanovski had been passed the ball wide on the right by Nick Orlc who had joined the attack at a corner which United had failed to clear. Lozanovski feinted past his marker and after taking the ball to the goal-line, hit it low and with menace into the crowded six-yard box where it could have hit, or been hit, by any number of players.

Was it only this time last season this was

the fixture which determined whether it was Sydney United or South Melbourne that would earn the Minor Premiership?

This year, by contrast, the contest could have had the feel of a musical recording star's contractual obligation album - necessary to fulfil an arrangement entered into at the season's start - but now being played out with little other than professional pride at stake.

However, the Sydney United youngsters' enthusiasm for the game, and South's barest flicker of hope for Finals action meant that neither side had it in mind just to go through the motions.

Although there were but lowly rewards on offer this season, compared to the riches of a previous one, there were playing futures and reputations at stake.

"From our point of view", said South coach Ange Postecoglou after the game, "we can't get much else out of the season, except to try to win as many of our last games as possible."

It would require a miracle beyond serious contemplation were South's season to continue beyond early May, but the mathematicians could not yet discount this as a possibility. Sydney United on the other hand, had likely resigned itself to its unhappy fate before their office staff had taken down last year's Christmas decorations.

Pickings have been spare for Sydney United this year, and with a mere four wins from their thirty previous games this campaign, and none of them on the road, only their most optimistic of supporters would have believed this was the game to turn things around.

And indeed, the shape of the game was set from the earliest moments.

"We expected a hard game from South Melbourne," said United coach Ivan Petkovic. "But we came here to play soccer. I'm happy with our performance, but a little disappointed too, because I thought we deserved a point."

"I think most people understand our situation," he said. "From last year we lost the whole team and (had) to start with nothing."

For long periods of the contest, it seemed that what was on view was an inter-club training game with South Melbourne supplying the first team equivalent, and the red-shirted Sydney visitors supplying the reserves and third-team opponents.

In these Tuesday night training-ground match-ups, occasionally the reserves battle with sufficient grit to earn a hard-fought win, and even a draw provides at least a week of changing-room boasting. More commonly however, the difference in class is reflected in the result - and the status quo is retained, even if the first team squad has barely been forced to delve deep into its capacities.

So went much of this game. In the first half, the possession was overwhelmingly in South's favour. South strung several series of passes together, and required United to take on a repelling role. Despite this, the goal opportunity count was even, as United moved the ball forwards with speed and directness, hoping to catch South on the break.

Five minutes in, John Anastasiadis found himself one on one with United goalkeeper Brett Hughes, and Hughes did enough to block

the veteran striker's shot and then watched as the loose ball was scrambled away for a corner.

Sydney United's best first half efforts came from a 25 metre Eddie Bosmar free-kick thunderbolt was blocked than gathered by Chris Jones. Just before the break, quick thinking from Aytec Genc - showing he could recognise an opportunity on the park on Saturday evening to the same high quality as he could off it as a television analyst during the Leeds Galatasaray UEFA Cup game early on Thursday morning - saw the opportunities arising after the award of a free-kick.

Whilst the South defence still considered its marking options, Genc played an early ball up the line to the unmarked Ante Moric, who in turn, whipped in a low cross into the six-yard box where Nick Boševski had made a run, only for Jones to make a blocking save at his feet.

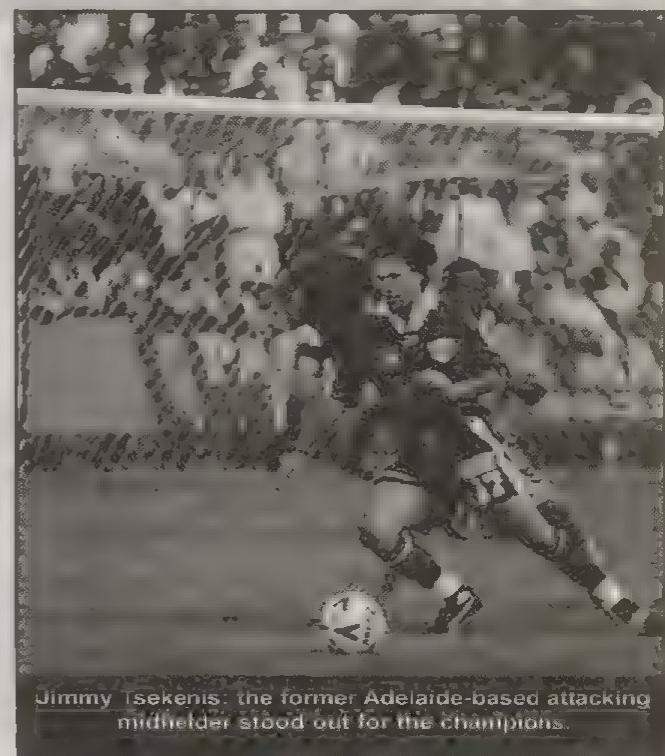
In between these two United chances, Michael Curcija had two opportunities for South. The first was a header just to the outside of the post following good work in the build-up from Goran Lozanovski and Jim Tsekinis. The second came after Tsekinis set him free with a perfectly-weighted through-ball, forcing a sharp save from Hughes.

Sydney United had shown better endeavour in the early part of the second half, but it wasn't long before the first-half roles were again applied.

The breakthrough was perhaps inevitable, given the shape of the game to that point, but was controversial none-the-less. Sydney United's pursuit of Lozanovski stopped as they believed the ball had gone over the goal-line and so out of play.

Lozanovski didn't hesitate, and his cross caught out Kupresak who put it past the hapless Hughes with Curcija threatening.

United kept battling, and such have been



Jimmy Tsekinis: the former Adelaide-based attacking midfielder stood out for the champions.

the fates that have affected South's season, it wouldn't have been beyond the bounds of possibility that United could have grabbed an equaliser.

Boševski and Genc each had runs which, with a little more luck, could have sent them free of the South back-line. But South's last defensive line is a clever combination of height and fleetness of foot, and coped adequately with these cameos.

The South starting eleven was made by South coach Postecoglou with at least an eye on his following two games - the Anzac Day game against Carlton, and the Friday game at Newcastle.

"It wasn't a great day for us", said Postecoglou. "It wasn't a great performance. That's probably my fault, because I've made four or five changes, and every time I've done that this year, we've struggled."

"We've got three games in six days - tonight, Tuesday, and Friday. This season, we've had this scenario frequently, and I've tossed (team selection) to spread the workload around, and it really hasn't worked for us."



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Kingz Silva service brings about Power failure

FOOTBALL KINGZ 4

Silva 29, 38, 62, Suri 90

PARRAMATTA POWER 0

Wednesday night at North Harbour Stadium, Auckland. Crowd 4,692.

Rnd 16 Deferred Game



MATCH STATS



FOOTBALL KINGZ:

Duke; Van Steeden (Osman 65), Hickey, Jones, Perry, Jackson, Ngata (Stergiopoulos, 65), Vicelich, Campbell, Rufer (Suri, 46), Silva.



PARRAMATTA POWER:

Crews; Vrkic, Plesa (Laybutt 70), Byrnes, Eagleton, Elrich, Ardone, Berry, Bennett (Griffiths, 65), Angelucci (Sterjovski, 61), Burns.

Yellows:

Power: R. Plesa (35), J. Burns (58), M. Sterjovski (90)

BEST PLAYER:

3. A. SILVA (KINGZ)
2. C. Jackson (Kingz)
1. W. Ardone (Power)

Referee: Jeremy Blaney

burn a little brighter, this result - and performance - a complete contrast to the lame display produced at the Melbourne Knights just three days previously.

The visitors certainly enjoyed the better of what can kindly be described as a scrappy, error-strewn opening twenty-five minutes, with neither side consistently able to string together a minimum of three passes during this period.

Walter Ardone had a hand in both moments of note which took place during this spell, his corner bringing about a well-struck Mark Byrnes volley after eight minutes, and his free-kick creating a headed chance for Peter Bennett six minutes later. Kingz' keeper Daniel Duke wasn't overly troubled on either occasion.

The game's first display of noteworthy enterprise came in the 26th minute, the lively Ahmad Elrich creating an opening for John Angelucci, who darted in from the right past the recalled Riki Van Steeden, only to curl his shot narrowly past Duke's right-hand post.

It served as a spark to the Kingz, who countered with a move of similar promise themselves seconds later. Jeff Campbell's flighted free-kick was headed down by Ivan Vicelich for Silva, who just failed to make contact on this occasion.

Two minutes later, he did so, and 4,692 fans went potty! Vicelich was the instigator of this 29th minute raid, but it was the most deft of flicks by Wynton Rufer which sent his striking partner scampering through Parramatta's spread-eagled rearguard, Silva taking the ball on before calmly placing his shot beyond the diving Andrew Crews and into the bottom right-hand corner of the net to open the scoring.

In all honesty, the game had needed this goal, for it gave the Kingz a surge of self-belief which appeared to have deserted them in Melbourne.

Their performance suddenly recaptured elements of the dominance to which Marconi had been so ruthlessly subjected

just twelve days previously.

Central to much of this was Rufer. The player-coach was quick to capture the spirit of the Kingz mood change, and completely dominated the remainder of the first half, setting up three glorious goalscoring opportunities, only one of which was converted.

In the 38th minute, Chris Jackson - his best display yet in a Kingz jersey - and Silva linked up with the gaffer, who thundered past Joe Vrkic at pace, much to the tall defender's

visible surprise. Rufer then whipped in a low cross, which neither Silva, at the near post, nor Harry Ngata, on the stretch at the far post, was able to convert into a two-goal lead.

The Kingz had but seconds to wait for this to eventuate however, and Rufer's vision was the key element in doubling the home side's advantage.

He threaded such a splendidly angled pass through the inside left channel that it provided the darting Silva with a two-yard advantage on Richard Plesa, who was unable to make up the distance prior to the fleet-footed Chilean turning inside the defender, then curling the ball beyond Crews' despairing dive into the far corner of the net from the edge of the penalty area.

The Kingz could have had another goal before the break, Rufer again the source. Campbell's free-kick dropped neatly for the striker, who stabbed the ball across for the completely unmarked Silva.

So startled was he with both the quality of the pass and the space in which he found himself that his reactions were not what they could have been, and a golden chance to complete a first half hat-trick went begging.

The second spell saw Parramatta looking for an early goal to get back into the match, with Ardone and the lively Elrich both going close, the latter doing so after play was allowed to continue by referee Jeremy Blaney.

To say this match official was non-committal is being kind to him. Mr Blaney appeared decidedly reluctant to make decisions in this match, only issuing three cards in total, and these for blatantly intentional fouls by Power players, even though a number of other offences had been committed by players of both sides.

The Kingz countered to good effect.

Batram Suri's first shot, following his half-time introduction to the fray at Rufer's expense, flew wide from the edge of the penalty area in the 56th minute, after Silva had benefitted from a stroke of good fortune, Van Steeden's long ball forward ricochetting off Byrnes' neck straight to the feet of the Chilean, who was celebrating his hat-trick in the 62nd minute.

Jackson's measured through ball sent Silva through, and his finish, after taking on Byrnes and out-thinking Crews, was exemplary - 3-0, and surely now, no way back for Parramatta.

The introduction of Joel Griffiths three minutes later added some much needed verve and vitality to the visitors' attacks, and he almost gained an early reward when pouncing on a fumble by Duke. Unfortunately for Parramatta, Levent Osman was on hand to negate - legally? - the threat the substitute posed on this occasion.

Later, Duke was to deny Griffiths, fellow substitute Mile Sterjovski and the visitors' best performer Ardone, while efforts from Stephen Laybutt, Sterjovski and Steve Berry all narrowly missed the target, the last-mentioned's chance coming about after Griffiths had seen the well-performed Noah Hickey head his shot



Aaron Silva: the little Chilean striker scored the Kingz' first hat-trick.

off the line in the dying minutes.

While Parramatta certainly created the greater number of scoring opportunities in the final quarter of the match, it was their own net in which the ball was to nestle once more before the final whistle, a goal which the Kingz had been pressing for via the probing passes of Jackson, Vicelich, Jonathan Perry and company.

Power's defence had had little difficulty coping with these, Suri having to do more and more running as his front-running partner, Silva, who had run himself ragged up front for the cause, tired noticeably towards the finish.

But the Kingz hat-trick hero summoned the last vestiges of petrol in the tank in stoppage time to latch onto a Vicelich pass down the left.

He turned to find himself in space aplenty, with Crews standing between him and a fourth goal.

Byrnes and Laybutt, amongst others, quickly retreated to provide their 'keeper with some semblance of cover, but Silva ignored this, instead unselfishly slipping the ball across to Suri, who gleefully steered it past the wrong-footed Crews to wrap up the scoring.

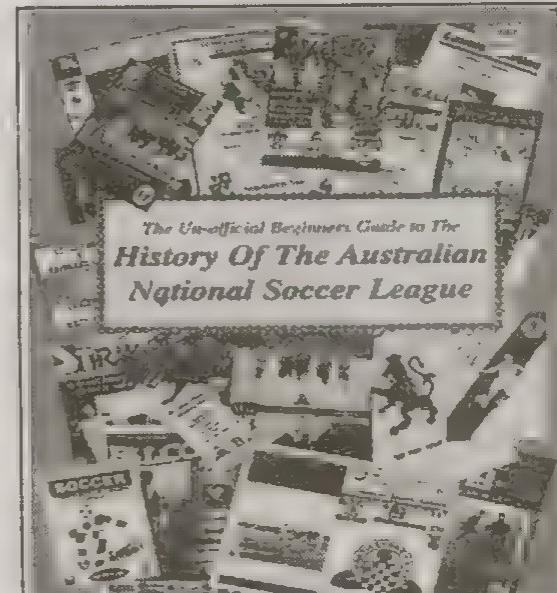


All-White Chris Jackson proved his worth again with a strong performance.

By Jeremy Ruane

Pint-sized Chilean striker Aaron Silva lit up North Harbour Stadium on April 19, his hat-trick - the first by a Football Kingz player - firing the Auckland-based National Soccer League contenders to a 4-0 trouncing of Parramatta Power, on whose own play-off hopes the lights have considerably dimmed following this encounter.

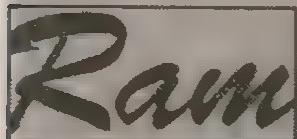
By the same token, those of the Kingz



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INSIDE JUNIOR SOCCER



Parramatta Power aim for 100 goals in debut season



Chris Conti saw the Newcastle Breakers and the ACT Academy of Sport play out an entertaining 1-1 draw in a rearranged game last Tuesday evening.

The game was switched from the very wet Breakers' Stadium to Swansea-Belmont's home ground at Blacksmiths.

In the eleventh minute, Academy's striker Daniel Aliffi won the ball in the Newcastle penalty area and set up Matt Anstey who shot over. Four minutes later,

Newcastle winger Robert Angievski hit a post. The chances kept arriving and ACT's Goran Veljanovski put a shot in straight at the Newcastle keeper, Brad Swancott, while at the other end Kurt O'Brien headed just wide.

Veljanovski saw another opportunity go wide, and in the 29th minute in a controversial incident Aliffi seemed to be tackled in the penalty area, but referee James Lewis played on.

Lewis was allowing the game to flow well, and just before half-time, the Breakers' Luke Tomich was disappointed to see his shot go over the bar.

In the second half both teams stepped up a gear and in the opening minute tall Paul Ivanic who was giving the Breakers' defence a torrid time, missed a good opportunity with a one-on-one with Swancott.

However, the ACT took the lead in the 64th. minute when Veljanovski curled a wicked free-kick out of the reach of Swancott. Their lead was short-lived as Newcastle stormed back and a centre from the left saw the tireless John Dennis rise high to give Rade Kosanovic in the ACTAS goal no chance with a bullet header from close range.

That was the end of the scoring, but both teams had numerous other chances. Ivanic and Aliffi both had further opportunities for the ACT as did Dennis, Joshua Rufo and Heath Simpson for Newcastle. Both teams in the end had to be satisfied with a point each.

ACTAS: Rade Kosanovic, Danny Agnello (Alvaro Guzman), Ian Waldon, Dom La Butte, Stephen Kemp, Adam Williams(capt), Matt Anstey, Steve Arnott (Andrew Aliffi), Daniel Aliffi, Goran Veljanovski, Paul Ivanic.

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS:

Brad Swancott, Chris Gazzard, Mark Nicholson, Adam Skelly, James Kemp, Kurt O'Brien (Joshua Rufo), John Dennis, Chris Tanchevski (Peter Beckler), David Ross, Robert Angievski (Heath Simpson), Luke Tomich.

Best Players:

ACTAS: Kemp, La Butte, Williams.
Newcastle: Dennis, Ross, Rufo.

Referees: James Lewis, Rodney Allen, Adam Francis.

The Katsaros reports that the deferred Rd 6 fixture between the Wollongong Wolves Colts and the Q.A.S. kicked off Rd 31 with the visitors securing a resounding 4-0 win.

The league's leading goal poacher Russell Miner added a double to his tally notching goals in both halves.

Jonathon Richter recorded a single on 51 minutes before the Q.A.S. were gifted their final goal when Mark Banasiak unfortunately put the ball into his own net.

The Wollongong Wolves Colts then backed up on Saturday as they travelled north to Valentine Park to tackle the N.S.W.I.S. The home side established a three-goal advantage in the first half before taking their foot off the gas.

Brett Holman scored a brace for the hosts and Matthew Engele chimed in with a goal after 13 minutes. Holman's goals came in the 7th and 32nd minutes.

The young Wolves Colts scored a consolation goal after 72 minutes courtesy of a Themi Kalathas strike.

The Q.A.S. also backed up on Saturday to record a hard fought victory over their hosts the Wollongong Wolves by one goal to nil to keep alive their slim hopes of a finals berth.

The Parramatta Power has all but clinched the minor premiership in their inaugural season after thumping title contenders Sydney Olympic at the Belmore Sports Ground. The 5-1 result maintains the Power's nine-point lead with three rounds remaining.

The Power took the lead on 16 minutes thanks to a strike from Matt Thompson.

Olympic replied on 20 minutes courtesy of an Alex Duric goal. The teams went to the break at 1-1 all but the second half saw Olympic overpowered by a more enthusiastic outfit.

Second half doubles to Brendan Santalab and Scott Dixon capped a fantastic performance by the Power.

The goals for Santalab came in the 59th and 87th minutes and Dixon scored in the 69th and 73rd minutes.

The Northern Spirit kept their hopes of finishing in the top two in tact after crushing the A.C.T.A.S. on Saturday. The Spirit is being pursued by the Marconi Stallions for

second place.

James Monie bagged four goals as he helped his side register a 5-0 victory over the Academy.

The hosts led 2-0 at the break and continued to pile on the pressure in the second half as they improved their goal difference, which may be crucial in the final wash-up of the season.

Monie scored his goals in the 21st, 43rd, 59th and 67th minutes. The final goal came after 77 minutes when Paul Wearne added his name to the scoresheet.

Another team still vying for the finals are the Newcastle Breakers. The Breakers have four matches remaining and may sneak into the four if they perform well over the closing weeks.

They sustained their charge on Saturday against a lacklustre Marconi Stallions Colts. The Breakers recording 7-1 victory over the visitors.

Joshua Rufo snared a hat-trick with goals after 5, 32 and 70 minutes. Robert Angievski bagged a double and Peter Juchniewicz and Chad Mansley chimed in with singles.

The only game on Easter Sunday saw the Northern Spirit Colts defeat the Sydney United Colts by three goals to one. All goals were scored in the second stanza.

John Majurovski got the ball rolling after 53 minutes for the Spirit. Michael Pearson equalised for United on 65 minutes but the joy was short lived as the Spirit regained the lead a minute later.

Nahuel Arrarte restoring the advantage. The match was sealed ten minutes from time when Luciano Berbis netted for the Spirit.

The final game of the round was played on Monday afternoon in Newcastle after this review went to print.

Last season's runner-up Russell Miner looks to have secured this season's golden boot award with three rounds remaining. Miner has a six goal lead over his nearest rival and must be commended on his efforts over the last two seasons.

Watch out for the Parramatta Power to chalk up a century of goals in their remaining matches. The Power has now scored an amazing 93 goals at an average of over 3 per match. With three matches remaining they are odds on to achieve this milestone.

There were no Southern NYL games over the weekend.

NORTHERN DIVISION NYL

	P	W	D	B	L	F	A Pts
Parramatta Power	29	23	4	2	2	93	13 73
Northern Spirit	29	20	4	2	5	86	36 64
Marconi Stallions	27	19	2	2	6	76	27 59
Sydney Olympic	29	18	5	2	6	84	43 59
Q.A.S.	30	17	3	2	10	82	50 54
Newcastle Breakers	28	17	3	1	8	59	84 54
A.I.S.	28	15	4	2	9	81	38 49
Wollongong Wolves	28	12	5	2	11	41	41 41
Sydney United	28	13	2	2	13	46	54 41
A.C.T.A.S.	27	9	8	2	10	40	51 35
Newcastle Colts	28	10	3	1	45	42	54 33
S. Olympic Academy	29	19	3	2	16	51	86 33
N.S.W.I.S.	28	7	7	2	14	40	49 28
Northern Spirit Colts	29	6	6	2	17	31	55 24
Marconi Stallions Colts	28	8	5	2	17	42	86 23
Sydney United Colts	28	3	4	2	21	30	77 13
Wollongong Colts	29	1	2	2	26	16	128 5

ROUND 31

Wollongong Colts	0	Q.A.S.	4
		Miner 2', 70', Richter 51', own goal 71'	
N.S.W.I.S.	3	Wollongong Colts	1
Holman 7', 32', Engele 13'		Kalathas 72'	
Sydney Olympic	1	Parramatta Power	5
Duric 20'		Thompson 16', Santalab 59', 87', Dixon 69', 73'	
Wollongong Wolves	0	Q.A.S.	1
		(scorer unavailable)	
Northern Spirit	5	A.C.T.A.S.	0
Monie 21', 43', 59', 67', Weare 77'			
Newcastle Breakers	7	Marconi Colts	1
Rufo 5', 32', 70', Angievski 15', scorer unavailable 83', Juchniewicz 40', Mansley 60'			
Sydney United Colts	1	Northern Spirit Colts	3
Pearson 65'		Majurovski 53', Arrarte 66', Berbis 80'	
Newcastle Breakers Colts v Sydney United			
(Monday 24th April - Breakers Stadium - 4.00pm)			
A.I.S. v Sydney Olympic Academy			
(To be played on Sunday 30 April 2000)			
Bye - Marconi Stallions			

	NORTHERN DIVISION - Leading Scorers				
Russell Miner					23
Daniel Severino					19
Ryan Griffiths					16
Alex Brosque					12
Kevo Gulessarian					12
Daniel Kukucka					12

Round 32 Fixtures

TUESDAY 25 APRIL 2000

Sydney United v Newcastle Breakers - (Sydney United Sports Centre)

A.C.T.A.S. v Northern Spirit Colts (Bruce Stadium)

Sydney Olympic Academy v Marconi Stallions - (Wentworth Park)

Wollongong Wolves Colts v Sydney Olympic - (Brandon Park No. 2)

Marconi Stallions Colts v N.S.W.I.S. - (Marconi Stadium)

Q.A.S. v Northern Spirit - (Suncorp Metway Stadium)

Parramatta Power v Wollongong Wolves - (Parramatta Stadium)

Bye - Newcastle Breakers Colts

Super League Summary

With catch-up games from rain-affected rounds earlier in the season being played over a glorious week leading into, and over, the Easter break in Sydney, the front-runners in the NSW Super League consolidated their positions in the Top Five.

The top four teams - Bonnyrigg, Blacktown, St George and Leichhardt - all had wins, with fifth-placed Parramatta playing a 1-1 draw with lowly Sutherland Sharks in what was a bit of a grudge match for Parramatta.

This was a game that was abandoned in the 69th minute due to torrential rain and an electric storm, after Parramatta had been leading 2-0 at the time.

In a later weekend game, Sutherland went down to the unpredictable Eastern Suburbs, 1-2 at Seymour Shaw Park. Paradiso scored a penalty for the home side in the 32nd minute to take them into the break with a 1-0 lead, but Eastern Suburbs struck back with two rapid fire goals within two minutes of each other in the second half

The referee gave Leichhardt captain, Steve Karavataki, a chance from the penalty spot which he duly put away to clinch victory for the home side in the dying moments of the game.

Bonnyrigg had a less than impressive 2-1 over Macarthur Rams at Lynwood Park, with Colin Luff scoring both of the visitors' goals. But three points is three points, and the win was enough to keep Bonnyrigg on top of the ladder, just one point clear of Blacktown and St George.

Despite a 5,500 strong crowd at Gosford's North Power Stadium, Central Coast couldn't thrill the parochial crowd - mixed with a few Northern Spirit fans ready to see the NSL game - with any goals.

The Coasters and Bankstown played out a tense and entertaining 0-0 draw (match report p.22) in the first ever game of real football at the new stadium.

In other games, St George recorded a double with a 3-0 win over Penrith Panthers on Wednesday and a 0-2 win over Canterbury Marrickville on Sunday and Blacktown did the business against Manly Warringah, winning 2-1.

There's plenty of Anzac Day action coming up, with Round 16 being completed when Parramatta Eagles meet Penrith in the first of a triple-header fixture at Parramatta Stadium, commencing at 3.30pm.

This is followed up by a big match for both sides, between Blacktown and Leichhardt at 5.30pm, then the Parramatta Power v Wollongong NSL match.

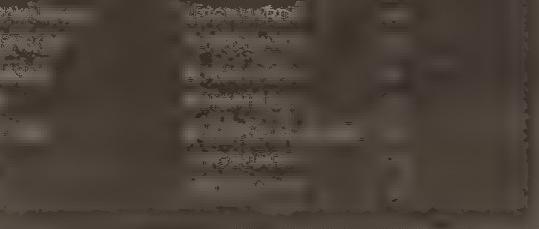
Other Anzac Day matches include an interesting tussle between two middle-of-the-table teams in Fairfield v Macarthur at Nineveh Field at 3.00pm; and Eastern Suburbs v Bonnyrigg at St George Stadium at 3.00pm.

Enjoy your football.

Super League top scorers

MARK MAGGIE

MACKENZIE



from Craig Sharpley and Jim Aschner.

It was certainly Good Friday for the Leichhardt Tigers who thrilled their fans with a hard-fought 3-2 win at Lambert Park.

Their visitors, Fairfield, were 2-0 up with fine headers from Borg and Hoenselaars in the 62nd and 64th minutes when the Tigers sprung into action, also with headers from Tomasevic and Bulgin.

In the end, it was a disputed handball which separated the sides.

NSW RESULTS

SUPER LEAGUE: FIRST GRADE: Parramatta Eagles 1 (N Joseski) Sutherland Shire 1 (A Selim), St George 3 (E Papageorgiou 10m B Petrovski 28m J Bakis 32m) Penrith Panthers 0, Leichhardt Tigers 3 (V Tomasevic 68m J Bulgin 78m S Karavataki 90m) Fairfield Bulls 2 (M Borg 62m M Hoenselaars 84m), Central Coast Coasters 0 Bankstown City Lions 0, Blacktown 2 (M Hagger 38m Z Donav 72m) Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 (Own Goal 81m), Sutherland Sharks 1 (C Paradisis 32m Penalty) Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 2 (C Sharpley 61m J Aschner 63m), Macarthur Rams 1 (D Cummins 61m) Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2 (C Luff 21/30m), Canterbury Marrickville Berries 0 St George Saints 2 (E Papageorgiou 75m J Baldis 86m). **UNDER 21:** St George 1 Penrith Panthers 0, Leichhardt Tigers 5 Fairfield Bulls 2, Blacktown City Demons 6 Manly Warringah Dolphins 0, Central Coast Coasters 5 Bankstown City Lions 0, Sutherland Sharks 1 Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 3, Macarthur Rams 0 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 3, Canterbury Marrickville Berries 3 St George Saints 0, Parramatta Eagles 0 Penrith Panthers 2. **UNDER 18:** St George 2 Penrith Panthers 2, Leichhardt Tigers 1 Fairfield Bulls 0, Blacktown City Demons 1 Manly Warringah Dolphins 1, Central Coast Coasters 1 Bankstown City Lions 0, Sutherland Sharks 3 Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0, Macarthur Rams 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 2, Canterbury Marrickville Berries 0 St George Saints 2, Parramatta Eagles 2 Penrith Panthers 2.

FEDERATION DIVISION ONE: FIRST GRADE: Bathurst '75 1 (M Lorimer 76m) Dulwich Hill 1 (M Bideau), M.S.C. Liverpool 2 (P Moon 75m T Dunlop 80m) Hajduk Wanderers 1 J Anderson 81m Penalty), Stanmore Hawks 2 (T Katsaros 20m T Lara 55m) Illawarra Lions 1 (A Mohseni 70m), Fraser Park 1 (M Cogger 88m) AC United 1 (J Melissourgos 13m), Rockdale City Suns 3 (S Najdoski 1/44m J Manolopoulos 18m) Hurstville City Minotaurs 0, Ryde City Gunners 2 (L Wilson 16m R Miranda 85m Penalty) Auburn United 3 (C Elgin 36m N Varees 64/73m). **UNDER 21:** Bathurst '75 2 Dulwich Hill 3, M.S.C. Liverpool 0 Hajduk Wanderers 1, Stanmore Hawks 18 Illawarra Lions 0, Fraser Park 1 AC United 4, Rockdale City Suns 2 Hurstville City Minotaurs 1, Ryde City Gunners 5, Auburn United 1. **UNDER 18:** Bathurst '75 0 Dulwich Hill 1, M.S.C. Liverpool 0 Hajduk Wanderers 1, Stanmore Hawks 3 Illawarra Lions 0, Fraser Park 2 AC United 5, Rockdale City Suns 1 Hurstville City Minotaurs 0, Ryde City Gunners 9, Auburn United 1.

FEDERATION DIVISION TWO: FIRST GRADE: Sydney University 0 Greystanes 4, White City 3 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 3, Hurstville ZSC 3 Mt Pritchard 0, Belmore Hercules 6 Sydney District 1, Central Coast Lakers 2 University of NSW 0, Hills United 2 Hakoah 0. **UNDER 21:** Sydney University 1 Greystanes 1, White City 3 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 5, Hurstville ZSC 2 Mt Pritchard 3, Belmore Hercules 3 Sydney District 2, Central Coast Lakers 2 University of NSW 1, Hills United 3 Hakoah 0. **UNDER 18:** Sydney University 0 Greystanes 0, White City 0 Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1, Hurstville ZSC 1 Mt Pritchard 2, Belmore Hercules 2 Sydney District 1, Central Coast Lakers 1 University of NSW 1, Hills United 1 Hakoah 0.

FEDERATION DIVISION THREE: FIRST GRADE: Nepean District 2 The Wanderers 1, Camden Tigers 2 Colo Colo 5, Western Sydney Lions 0 Balmain 0, Trasandinos 3 Prospect United 6, Holy Cross Ryde 4 Prairiewood United 5, Parramatta City 1 Liverpool City 2. **RESERVE GRADE:** Nepean District 4 The Wanderers 0, Camden Tigers 3 Colo Colo 1, Western Sydney Lions 1 Balmain 4, Trasandinos 2 Prospect United 2, Holy Cross Ryde 1 Prairiewood United 0, Parramatta City 6 Liverpool City 0.

WOMENS SUPER LEAGUE: FIRST GRADE: Nepean Association 2 Macarthur Rams 0. **UNDER 21:** Nepean Association 1 Macarthur Rams 6.

WOMENS STATE LEAGUE: UNDER 19: UTS 11 CSI Schofields 1.

SUPER YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Sydney United 1 Northern Spirit 1, Sydney Olympic 5 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Marconi Stallions 3 Macarthur Rams 2, Leichhardt Tigers 1 St George 0, Penrith Panthers 2 Parramatta Eagles 6, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Blacktown City Demons 2, Bankstown City 3 Central Coast Coasters 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0 Newcastle Breakers 4, Fairfield Bulls 5 Wollongong Wolves 2, Sutherland Sharks 11 Canterbury Marrickville 0. **GRADE 14:** Sydney United 0 Northern Spirit 2, Sydney Olympic 1 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Marconi Stallions 2 Macarthur Rams 1, Leichhardt Tigers 1 St George 0, Penrith Panthers 2 Parramatta Eagles 2, Manly Warringah Dolphins 0 Blacktown City Demons 2, Bankstown City 2 Central Coast Coasters 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1 Newcastle Breakers 2, Fairfield Bulls 0 Wollongong Wolves 7, Sutherland Sharks 3 Canterbury Marrickville 2. **GRADE 15:** Sydney United 1 Northern Spirit 3, Sydney Olympic 3 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 1, Marconi Stallions 2 Macarthur Rams 1, Leichhardt Tigers 1 St George 0, Penrith Panthers 1 Parramatta Eagles 5, Manly Warringah Dolphins 3 Blacktown City Demons 2, Bankstown City 3 Central Coast Coasters 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 0 Newcastle Breakers 1, Fairfield Bulls 0 Wollongong Wolves 3, Sutherland Sharks 3 Canterbury Marrickville 1. **GRADE 16:** Sydney United 3 Northern Spirit 3, Sydney Olympic 5 Bonnyrigg White Eagles 0, Marconi Stallions 3 Macarthur Rams 1, Leichhardt Tigers 1 St George 2, Penrith Panthers 1 Parramatta Eagles 4, Manly Warringah Dolphins 1 Blacktown City Demons 1, Bankstown City 2 Central Coast Coasters 0, Eastern Suburbs Wanderers 1 Newcastle Breakers 6, Fairfield Bulls 1 Wollongong Wolves 1, Sutherland Sharks 3 Canterbury Marrickville 0.

DIVISION ONE YOUTH LEAGUE: GRADE 13: Southern Branch 6 Stanmore Hawks 0, Hajduk Wanderers 0 AC United 2. **GRADE 14:** Southern Branch 3 Stanmore Hawks 0, Hajduk Wanderers 0 AC United 1. **GRADE 15:** Southern Branch 2 Stanmore Hawks 0, Hajduk Wanderers 0 AC United 1. **GRADE 16:** Southern Branch 0 Stanmore Hawks 0, Hajduk Wanderers 1, AC United 0.

SUPER CADET LEAGUE: GRADE 11: Marconi 0 Parramatta Eagles 0. **GRADE 12:** Marconi 8 Parramatta Eagles 0.

CADET LEAGUE DIVISION ONE: GRADE 11: Mt Druitt Town Rangers 2 MSC Liverpool 0, Hajduk Wanderers 1 Stanmore Hawks 1. **GRADE 12:** Mt Druitt Town Rangers 1 MSC Liverpool 0, Hajduk Wanderers 5 Stanmore Hawks 2.

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Hagger scores but suspended for vital clash

BLACKTOWN DEMONS 2

Hagger 37, Donev 72.

MANLY WARRINGAH 1

Dee og 81.

Saturday afternoon at Gabba Stadium, Sydney.



Damian Langan: one of Demons' best

Blacktown's 20 year-old striker, Mark Hagger did it again. Sadly for him and his team a yellow card means he is suspended for today's blockbuster against Leichhardt Tigers at Parramatta Stadium.

For the sixth match in succession his name appeared on the score sheet but an impetuous challenge in the 35th minute led to his fifth yellow card of the season and with it an automatic one match suspension.

He will now miss the mouth watering, top of the table Anzac Day clash with Leichhardt Tigers at the Parramatta Stadium forcing his coach, Brian Brown, into another re-shuffle of the team.

In a first half dominated by the Demons, Manly's central defender Steve Hickman was a tower of strength, holding his defence together as Blacktown threatened Dean McCreath in the Dolphins' goal on a number of occasions.

Naoki Imaya, blasting over the bar from two metres out in the 18th minute, Hagger in the 6th and 13th minutes and Damien Brown in the 30th minute all went close before the irrepressible Hagger notched his seventeenth strike of the current campaign in the 37th minute.

Paul Dee raced down the right wing and picked

out Imaya with a short pass and whilst Jason Bennett made a near post run drawing the Manly defence with him, Hagger ghosted towards the far post to drive home Imaya's cross.

In reply, Manly only had one first half effort of any note when their highly mobile forward, Mark Beldham, received a pass from Robert Smithies in the 27th minute and had his shot blocked by Blacktown keeper, Fernando Greco, only for Shane Webb to fire the rebound over the bar.

The Dolphins, thanks to the non-stop efforts of the aforementioned Beldham, raised their game in the second half and almost equalised in the first minute after the restart when Smithies' goal bound shot was saved by Greco.

Eighteen minutes later Beldham was almost rewarded for his industry when he won the ball in the middle of the park and sped unchallenged towards the target but Greco just managed to thwart him in their one-on-one encounter.

The only blemish on Hickman's performance for Manly occurred in the 72nd minute when he failed to judge the bounce of the ball and, tragically for the big-hearted defender, it led to Blacktown's second goal.

As the ball bobbed past him Zlatko Donev, Blacktown's recent signing from top Victorian Premier League side Green Gully Cavaliers, pounced on the mistake and steadied himself before coolly placing the ball wide of McCreath and into the bottom corner of the net.

The Dolphins redoubled their efforts to get back into the game and the ubiquitous Beldham, although not scoring, was responsible for their only goal of the game in the 81st minute when his blistering cross from the right cannoned off the Demons' Dee and into the net past the bewildered Greco.

The latter stages of the match was played at a furious pace with shots galore in the final ten minutes. The Dolphins failed narrowly when, yet again, Greco made a great save from Beldham while Dee and Bennett (twice) had well struck shots blocked.

BLACKTOWN CITY DEMONS: Greco, Foxe, Langan, Bradley, Riches (Yates 76), Marosevic (Sermanni 67), Brown, Dee, Imaya, Hagger (Donev 46), Bennett. Subs not used: Reid.

MANLY WARRINGAH DOLPHINS: McCreath, Robertson, Foster, Mikulski, Kukn, Hickman, D. Webb, S. Webb, Pettenton, Beldham, Smithies (Martin 75). Subs not used: Steel, Wilson, Barbalace.

YELLOW CARDS:

Demons: Riches 34, Hagger 35, Langan 79.
Dolphins: Foster 25, Pettenton 32, Robertson 89.

BEST PLAYERS:

Demons: Langan, Brown, Bennett.
Dolphins: Beldham, Hickman, McCreath.

Super League Tables

FIRST GRADE:	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
BONNYRIGG WHITE EAGLES	15	11	0	4	42	27	33	15
Blacktown City Demons	15	10	2	3	43	14	32	29
St George Saints	16	10	2	4	31	20	32	11
Leichhardt Tigers	14	9	2	3	35	21	29	14
Parramatta Eagles	15	6	7	2	34	24	25	10
Central Coast Coasties	15	6	4	5	26	20	22	6
Canterbury Marrickville	16	7	0	9	25	36	21	-11
Bankstown City Lions	16	5	5	6	22	22	20	0
Eastern Suburbs	15	6	1	8	27	32	19	-5
Fairfield Bulls	15	5	3	7	24	26	18	-2
Macarthur Rams	15	3	5	7	18	24	14	-6
Penrith Panthers	14	4	1	9	14	35	13	-21
Sutherland Sharks	16	3	2	11	18	42	11	-24
Manly Warringah Dolphins	15	2	4	9	17	33	10	-16

UNDER 21	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
CENTRAL COAST COASTIES	15	10	2	3	29	15	32	14
Blacktown City Demons	15	9	4	2	38	18	31	20
Penrith Panthers	15	9	1	5	30	22	28	8
Leichhardt Tigers	14	8	2	4	32	20	26	12
Parramatta Eagles	16	6	4	6	22	19	22	3
St George Saints	16	6	4	6	26	25	22	1
Manly Warringah Dolphins	15	6	2	7	28	32	20	-4
Canterbury Marrickville	16	6	2	8	27	33	20	-6
Macarthur Rams	15	6	1	8	20	28	19	-8
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	15	4	5	6	22	24	17	-2
Eastern Suburbs	15	4	5	6	22	29	17	-7
Sutherland Sharks	16	4	5	7	22	34	17	-12
Fairfield Bulls	15	4	3	8	22	31	15	-9
Bankstown City Lions	16	3	4	9	29	39	13	-10

UNDER 18	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts	GD
PARRAMATTA EAGLES	16	11	2	3	48	21	36	25
Blacktown City Demons	15	9	5	1	27	11	32	16
Fairfield Bulls	15	10	1	4	29	18	31	11
Leichhardt Tigers	14	9	2	3	35	22	29	13
Central Coast Coasties	15	7	2	6	31	21	23	10
Macarthur Rams	15	6	5	4	26	21	23	5
Penrith Panthers	15	5	7	3	28	17	22	11
Bonnyrigg White Eagles	15	6	3	6	21	24	21	-3
Sutherland Sharks	16	5	5	6	23	21	20	2
Bankstown City Lions	16	5	3	8	23	31	18	-8
Eastern Suburbs	15	4	5	6	22	32	17	-10
St George Saints	16	3	5	8	21	46	14	-25
Manly Warringah Dolphins	15	2	2	11	14	27	8	-13
Canterbury Marrickville	16	0	3	13	11	45	3	-34

SUPER LEAGUE

Official clothing supplier to the NSW Soccer Federation

ROUND SEVENTEEN

Saturday 29 April

Bonnyrigg W. E. v Canterbury M'kville - Serbian Centre

Games 7.00pm (1st grade) - 5.00pm (21s) - 3.00pm (18s)

Central Coast Coasties v Manly Warringah - Plum Park

Games 6.00pm (1st grade) - 4.00pm (21s) - 2.00pm (18s)

Sunday 30 April

St George v Parramatta Eagles - St George Stadium

Games 3.00pm (1st grade) - 1.00pm (21s) - 11.00am (18s)

Leichhardt Tigers v Macarthur Rams - Lambert Park

Games 3.00pm (1st grade) - 1.00pm (21s) - 11.00am (18s)

Penrith Panthers v Blacktown City - Andrews Road Field

Games 3.00pm (1st grade) - 1.00pm (21s) - 11.00am (18s)

Bankstown City Lions v Sutherland Sharks - Jensen Park

Game 3.00pm(1st grade) - 1.00pm (21s) - 11.00am (18s)

Eastern Suburbs v Fairfield Bulls - Wentworth Park

Game 3.00pm(1st grade) - 1.00pm (21s) - 11.00am (18s)

Catch all the latest news on football in NSW in Super Soccer OUT 27 April!

www.soccernsw.com.au

Shirl the Curl!

Peter Preston: Coasties' popular leader on and off the park

The year 1999 was undoubtedly the highlight of Peter Preston's soccer career. He was appointed captain of the Central Coast Coasties, he became the club's leading goalscorer, was selected in the NSW Super League team and won the Super League Player of the year Gold Medal. And yes, off the field he found out he was to be a father for the first time, which is in about three weeks!

Given the name of 'Shirley', by a youth coach many years ago, when he had long curly hair (aka Shirley Temple) Preston has progressed over the years to a modern, and in fashion, bald headed soccer player, respected by all opponents and team mates alike.

Preston was also named by last year's Coasties' coach Allan Bourke as the best attacking midfielder in Super League and one of the best in the country.

Preston, sorry 'Shirley', was brought up in Narellan, near Camden, in NSW and started playing soccer at "around seven or eight years old" and showed no signs of being the player he is today. ("useless, will never make a footballer!").

But things change. Shirley, gradually progressed through the Youth age groups and started playing with Campbelltown (now Macarthur Rams) and then played a couple of seasons with Illawarra Lions.

He then moved to the Central Coast and

the Coasties grabbed him with open arms.

He was just what the club was looking for in their early years in the Super League.

He has steadily become the most respected player in Super League and a cult figure among the young soccer players on the Central Coast.

Everybody knows and wants to meet Shirley!

The 2000 season has however been somewhat frustrating. Re-appointed captain by new coach Dale Eagleton, the Coasties were on top of the table after five rounds, all away from home, but have recently slipped down the table after a run of matches at home where they couldn't seem to score goals, until the recent 5-1 romp over Easts.

Preston had a couple of niggling injuries, he had a minor knee operation in the off season and played on to help his beloved Coasties in the top five.

Four weeks ago he suffered a bad groin and stomach muscle injuries and has been on the sidelines since - but being the person he is he offered to assist in coaching the Coasties under 15 team who had lost their appointed coach.

Needless to say his offer was accepted and the under 15's are improving with each match.

Shirley is working hard to get fit to return to the playing field; his team is sorely in need of his experience and leadership.

On top of this he has another major prob-

lem. His fiancee, Melissa, is asking him what he will do if the baby comes on a match day? Shirley has the answer to most soccer problems but what will be his decision in this instance?

Unless the Coasties can recover their early season form, the 2000 season will never match 1999 - but you never know!

If he can get back on the field in the next couple of weeks he may still lead his team to end of the season honours.

One thing is for sure, whatever the outcome Shirley will remain the Central Coast kids' favourite for many years.

Let's hope Melissa presents him with a boy! If it's a girl we could have two Shirlies in the Preston household - perish the thought!

On a serious note, the Coasties, and Soccer, need Shirley back on the field. The opposition are delighted when they find out he's not playing but they are really disappointed that he is not around to show his skills.

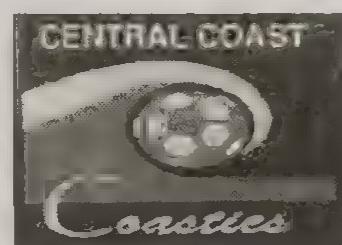
As one opposition coach said a few weeks ago, "The Coasties need Shirley, soccer needs blokes like Shirley, it's a tragedy that a player, and gentleman, of his ability is not on the field.

"He is obviously disappointed, but so are

we!"

Shirley, hurry up and get fit but more importantly don't change. It is a pleasure to have been around with you. If only all soccer players, and sportsmen, could follow your example.

Peter 'Shirley' Preston, Inside Soccer salutes you and look forward to hearing some happy news on the home front and seeing you back doing what you do best: playing footy.



Midweek Super League

Two Super League games were played midweek. The first game at St George Stadium saw a confident St George defeat the plucky Penrith Panthers 3-0, all the goals coming in the first half.

Manuel Papageorgiou netted the first after only a few minutes and Bill Petrovski added a second soon after.

A later penalty put away by Jim Bakis gave the Saints enough to coast through the rest of the match as Penrith defended determinedly and attempted to score on the break, without success.

The shock result was at Melita Stadium where Parramatta Eagles had earlier in the month led Sutherland 2-0 and had looked set for an easy win, only for the game to be abandoned due to the state of the pitch.

This time around Sutherland managed to score early on when Ali Salim ran onto a nicely weighted through ball from Wayne Gibson to go on and beat the keeper.

The Eagles fought hard and drew level in the 78th when Nick Joseski stabbed home from close range after a corner had not been cleared.

The game ended in a 1-1 draw to give Sutherland their third point from three recent away matches and spoil Parramatta's plans to march into a top five spot, for the moment at least.



Coasties open new stadium

But Lions hold out for 0-0 draw at North Power

Everything was perfect for Central Coast. A fantastic stadium, great surface, big crowd. Sadly, a resolute Lions side rained on the parade, holding out for a 0-0 draw on Saturday night at North Power Stadium.

Despite this result, it was in fact a Central Coast player who had the honour of scoring the first goal at the new Stadium. Former Coastie Andrew Clark scored both goals for Canberra Cosmos in the later match.

How the Coasters, and Bankstown for that matter, could have done with him on the night.

The match was, in fact, a highly entertaining affair with both teams committed to attack and plenty of near misses were the order of the night but, unfortunately, no goals.

Coasters attacked from the kick off and within nine minutes Nathan Bym, Peter Ritchie and Stuart Sortag all forced Zlatko Joseski in the Bankstown goal to make good saves.

Bankstown replied with Richard Luksic receiving the ball from a free kick and Shaun Matthews cleared on the line with ever-reliable Gary Meier beaten.

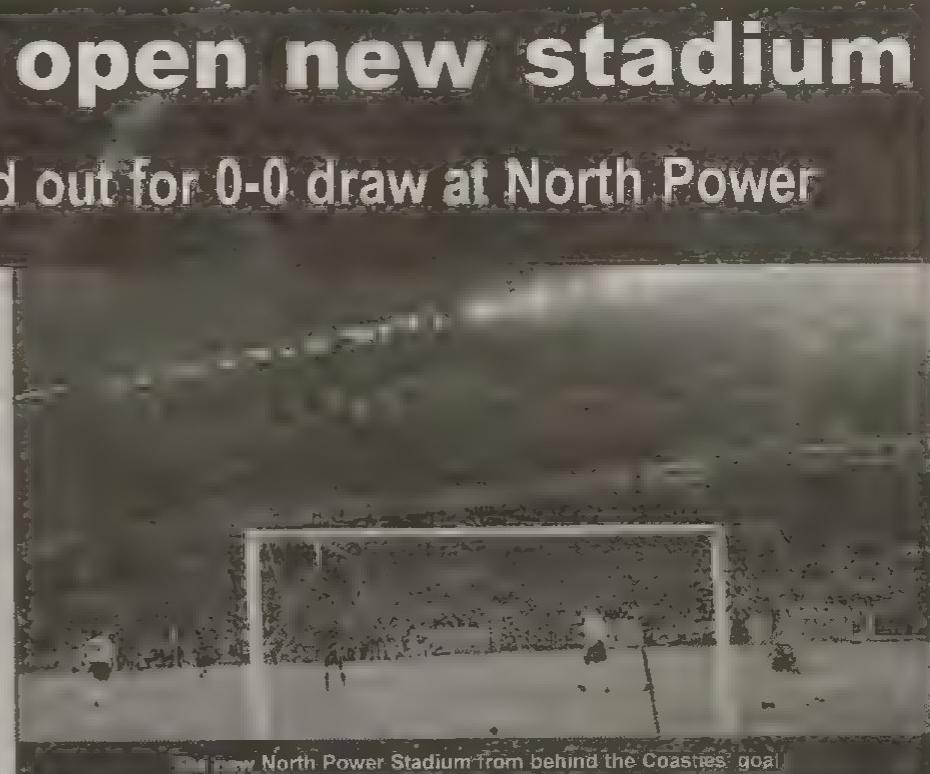
Nabil Coomani let one go from twenty metres and Meier made a great save low down as the action heated up.

Up at the other end Joseski and his defence desperately held out a Coastie onslaught until half time with Bym, Adam Peatey and Ritchie all going close.

After the half time break the Coasties continued their attack but to no avail.

Bankstown then had their turn at trying to score with Coomani, Luksic and Bryan Raeburn all going close.

Both coaches made substitutions in an effort to find that elusive goal.



CENTRAL COAST COASTIES: Meier, Matthews, Steele, Drysdale, Peatey (Leary), Roper, Bym (Hokin), Roberts, Ritchie, Daley (Marshall), Sortag.

BANKSTOWN CITY LIONS: Z. Joseski, T. Joseski, Trpceski (McDonald), Luksic, Abi-Arrage, Coomani, Issa (Kansan), Trposki, Zane, Lemazina (Losevaki), Raeburn.

Crowd: 4,500.

Yellows:
Coasters: Nil
Bankstown: Zane

Referee: Greg Leverton.

Around the grounds in the VPL

Inside Soccer's Mark Fisher has a look at some off-field developments

Scan your eyes across the Victorian Premier League landscape and it might not seem so plain or obvious. Yet when you sit down and discuss planning matters with officials from the clubs themselves, you will hear of bold moves to augment club infrastructure on a level not seen for a decade or more.

And the driving force behind this impending process for Victorian clubs?

For some, it is the desire to return to the national competition. For others, it is the chance to reach for a higher level in terms of profile and corporate interest, and in doing so, hopefully bolster their clubs' futures.

Whatever the motive, the proposed NSL second division, despite a lack of disclosure thus far on its likely criteria, is serving as a driving force for change in Victorian soccer. The following is a summary of how each of the VPL's clubs are placed in terms of facilities, as well as upgrades either in progress or currently residing on the drawing board.

THE CLUBS

Altona's Paisley Park is home to two Victorian Premier League clubs, in the form of Altona East Phoenix (located on eastern half of the reserve) and Altona Magic (western half). Interestingly, the clubs do not adhere to a ground sharing arrangement as such, apart from the utilisation of common parking space.

The Phoenix presently uses a separate ground, office and club room, player change rooms and food and drink facilities, and looks content to continue to remain a viable entity in the Premier League itself.

The Magic is similarly placed in terms of facilities and aims, however thanks to the injection of money from SOCOG, the playing surface has been improved to Olympic training standard.

On the opposite side of town, the Bentleigh Greens is a club servicing Melbourne's mid-peninsula region. As one of the more modern clubs in the city, the club has a tidy press box overlooking the ground from the east. It is a very new complex occupying a large site, complete with modern player change rooms.

According to at least one club official, there is considerable interest in developing the Kingston Heath complex further from a revenue-generating viewpoint.

Whilst Bentleigh may not be one of the better placed clubs for entry into the NSL second division at present, it could have the potential to do so within the next decade, particularly if it was able to install a stand with seating on

the western side of the ground.

Bulleen is perhaps one of two clubs that believes it is ready for the 2nd Division right now, according to president Michael Catalano. It boasts a covered stand with flat wooden seating for 500-600 people, complete with press box.

On the eastern side of the ground is a plush VIP box on level two, backing onto what is a massive indoor sports (basketball, bocce, squash, tennis, gymnasium) and social club complex known as the Veneto Club.

Bulleen has approached the local council in order to develop another training venue south of the existing playing ground. The club has been able to attract a very strong level of junior participation, highlighting its willingness to grow not only its own base but also the game at large within Melbourne's eastern suburbs.

In contrast with Bulleen, Fawkner has been your typical struggling suburban soccer club since its inception in 1967. Yet with the addition of a stand on the western side of the ground (completed as a result of concrete donated to the club), the potential is there for the Blues to develop their site much more substantially.

Whilst at present the western section is unseated, the club is endeavouring to generate the funds necessary to install seats, perhaps 2,000 in number, along the 100 metre expanse of the western stand, but that may be a fair way off yet.

Fawkner too harbours hopes of eventually joining the NSL 2nd Division, although some club members don't expect it the club to reach that level until further upgrades to facilities take place.

Occupying a central spot in the western stand is a modern press box, complete with phone and fax. On the northern side sits the clubroom and VIP box, which also doubles as a press area, looking directly at the northern goal.

Training facilities comprise a ground to the east of the main pitch. These are currently stretched to breaking point as the club's junior registrations are full to capacity. The club also utilises a ground in Pascoe Vale for National Youth League purposes.

The club is very accessible via public transport, by way of buses along nearby Sydney Road and a train station no more than 200 metres away.

Green Gully is one of the few Victorian soccer clubs with income generated from gambling. The clubroom itself is large and spacious, with reception facilities and modern dining appointments.

The press box on 2nd level of VIP box,



The entrance to Green Gully's excellent facilities. Pic by Markian Jaworsky

equipped with phone and fax.

A food and beverage counter on the western side is in place. On the eastern side a food van is often available as well.

At present, works are going on at the northern half of the eastern side, with purpose-built change rooms for the women's and junior teams currently under construction.

Green Gully's ground is one of the best for evening football in Victoria, as a result of the installation of some \$50,000 dollars worth of lighting. Gully is able to fund improvements to facilities courtesy of strong cash flow, available by way of the club's solid poker machine revenue.

As stated in an interview with Inside Soccer's Markian Jaworsky, club president Charles Farrugia maintained that the club "has plans for undercover seating at the ground. It's not going to happen next season, but (it should happen) sometime in the next five years". Gully looks a very strong candidate for the 2nd Division on and off the field.

Heidelberg's Olympic Village facilities have been earmarked for a 2 million dollar upgrade, primarily in order to assist the club's push for inclusion in the proposed NSL second division from 2001/2.

A four million dollar plan was originally proposed, which included the creation or acquisition of a gaming venue, but the local council

was not supportive of the bid, on the grounds that it believed there were too many poker machines within its constituency already. The grandstand on the eastern side of the ground shelters approximately 2,500 patrons, with seating (otherwise in a state of disrepair) for 2,000. The club has budgeted for 300 new seats to be installed within the main grandstand in order to replace the old and damaged ones. The western side has a small shelter, strictly standing room only, in front of a designated VIP and press area.

To the north of the pitch is where the club room and player dressing rooms are located.

The overall site contains 3 reduced-size training areas. True to its name, the Olympic Village site also includes a 400-metre running track that encircles the playing pitch.

Media spokesman Nicholas Rahovitsas indicated that Heidelberg is re-developing for re-inclusion in the National League, and the club has been able to record attendances of between 2-3,000 fans for big derbies over the last few years.

In terms of attracting new supporters, the club has also just given associate membership to the Somalian Community Organisation of Australia, numbering some 8,000 people in Melbourne alone. In time Heidelberg could well return to the NSL fold.

Continued next page

VICTORIAN PREMIER LEAGUE

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eat well live well

ROUND TWELVE

Sunday 30 April

Altona East Phoenix v Fawkner Blues - Paisley Reserve

3.00(First Grade)/1.00 (Reserves)

Bulleen Zebras v Green Gully Cavaliers - Veneto Club

3.00(First Grade)/1.00(Reserves)

Monday 1 May

Melbourne Raiders v Preston Lions - Epping SS

8.15(First Grade)/6.15Reserves)

FIRST GRADE

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Bentleigh Greens	11	9	1	1	25	7.28	
Altona East Phoenix	11	6	2	3	19	12.20	
Altona Magic	11	5	3	3	14	13.18	
St Albans Saints	11	4	4	3	13	14.16	
Preston Lions	10	4	3	3	18	13.15	
Oakleigh Cannons	11	3	4	4	13	15.13	
Bulleen Zebras	11	3	5	4	17	20.13	
Melbourne Raiders	11	3	3	5	15	19.12	
Port Melbourne Sharks	10	2	5	3	10	11.11	
Fawkner Blues	11	3	2	6	18	23.11	
Heidelberg United	11	2	4	5	10	16.10	
	11	3	1	7	14	23.10	

RESERVES

GREEN GULLY CAVALIERS

	P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Bentleigh Greens	11	8	1	4	13	26	
St Albans Saints	11	8	0	3	40	17.24	
Port Melbourne Sharks	11	5	5	1	25	18.20	
Altona Magic	11	5	3	3	25	22.18	
Preston Lions	11	5	2	4	28	28.17	
Altona East Phoenix	11	3	6	2	27	20.15	
Bulleen Zebras	11	4	2	5	16	24.14	
Fawkner Blues	11	3	3	4	31	24.12	
Melbourne Raiders	11	2	4	5	23	30.12	
Heidelberg United	11	1	3	7	12	35.6	
Oakleigh Cannons	11	1	3	7	9	33.6	

Three Foxes sent-off in two minutes!

Foxes lose their cool in derby, Eagles stay hot and Croydon maintain top form

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Gd	Pts
Adelaide Blue Eagles	10	8	1	1	30	6	24	25
Croydon Kings	10	7	0	3	25	10	15	21
Modbury	10	7	0	3	14	12	2	21
Port Lion	10	6	1	3	21	13	8	19
Elizabeth City	10	4	2	4	19	15	4	14
Adelaide City	10	4	2	4	16	16	0	14
Campbelltown City	10	4	1	5	15	21	-6	13
White City Warriors	10	3	1	6	6	13	-7	10
Cumberland United	10	3	1	6	8	17	-9	10
Raiders	10	3	0	7	13	17	-4	9
West Torrens Birkalla	10	3	3	5	12	25	-13	9
Metro Stars	10	2	2	6	12	28	-14	8

STATE LEAGUE

Olympic FC	10	8	2	0	26	8	18	26
Para Hills Knights	10	6	3	1	26	10	16	21
Port Pirie City	10	6	2	2	27	15	12	20
Adelaide Cobras	10	5	2	3	20	18	4	17
Salisbury United	10	5	1	4	17	20	-3	16
Noarlunga United	10	5	0	5	14	16	-2	15
Northern Demons	10	4	2	4	20	19	1	14
Western Strikers	10	3	5	2	19	18	1	14
Enfield City	10	3	2	5	21	23	1	11
Adelaide Hills	10	2	1	7	15	29	-14	7
Panthers	10	1	1	8	11	24	-13	4
Seaford	10	1	1	8	9	27	-18	4

By Donald Campbell and Margaret Bowden

Reigning champions Cumberland Foxes were left with more than red faces after a torrid south-western districts derby against neighbour West Torrens Birkalla on Saturday saw them go down 0-2 in South Australia.

Buoyed by the return of star centre back Robbie Walczynski, the Foxes were full of confidence, but lost the plot mid-way through the second half.

Referee Keith Bruce-Gordon sent off three Foxes in the space of two minutes. Keeper Matt Peace and ex-Force player Bradley Armour received their marching orders after a 12 player brawl in the penalty area.

Current table-toppers Blue Eagles made amends for last week's shock loss by decimating second placed Port Lion Pirates 4-1.

The Pirates' recent form deserted them as Blue Eagles went 3-0 up after only 20 minutes through Joe Cutillo, Frank Sergi and league leading goalscorer Michael Brooks.

Ross Calabria pulled one back for the Pirates in the second half, but Brooks scored again for Blue Eagles' 30th goal of the season.

Croydon Kings continued their inspirational form, giving Campbelltown Red Devils no chance in a 4-0 drubbing. Leading only one nil at half time through Josh Deptula, Croydon turned the thumb screws in the second half, Deptula scoring again and Joel Porter sinking two.

Modbury Jets also continued on their winning way, sneaking a goal in the 90th minute to down northern neighbours Elizabeth City Rams 3-2.

This game looked destined for a draw from the start, the scores locked 1-1 at the break, Modbury getting the upper hand early in the second half, then Steven Kidd equalising for the Rams.

Colin Isaacson came on for the Jets in the dying minutes, headed straight for goal, and to coach Duane Gray's amazement scored the win-

There were no surprises when Adelaide City defeated White City Woodville 3-1. Consistent scorers for City Robbie Saraceno and Scott Tunbridge did the damage, while Plunkett got the consolation goal for White City.

Adelaide city coach Milan Ivanovic must have been well satisfied with the result, as he used to play on loan to White City in the NSL off season!

Raiders, a good team on paper, finally found the form expected of them to post a well deserved 3-0 win over Metro Stars, sending the League newcomer crashing to the bottom of the table.

Justin Bralic opened the scoring for the Raiders in the first half, then Paul Karmitelis and Con Georgiou took the shine out of the Stars in the second.

In the State League it was a day of local derbies in South Australia, the traditional southern derby between Noarlunga Bulldogs and Seaford Surfers saw the home side win 2-0. Seaford missed an open goal in the first five minutes, letting the Bulldogs off the leash to punish them ten minutes later.

Coach Gary Price's son Scott scored to make it 1-0 at half time, then Peter Francis sealed the game 3 minutes into the second half.

Para Hills Knights recovered from their ignominious defeat by Cobras last week to defeat Salisbury United 4-1 in the northern derby. Knights coach Eric Norman promotes 4 players from the Under 23s and they didn't disappoint the boss.

The Knights dominated from start to finish, with Mark Mulady scoring twice and G. Cook and D. Eggars adding to the tally. J. Robson scored Salisbury's only goal in the second half, but it was far too late for a comeback.

Port Pirie City continued their home winning streak, defeating Adelaide Hills 2-0. Their first goal came in the first half when Corrieri opportunistically heel-flicked a ball in the penalty area, sending man of the match, Hills keeper Steve Spencer, the wrong way.

The score remained at 1-0 until late in the second half, when Hills coach Craig Leith traded a defender for a forward in a last ditch attempt for a draw. Port Pirie took advantage of the move, Corrieri scoring their second in the last minutes.

Olympic maintained their 5 point lead at the top of the table, defeating in-form Northern Demons 2-0. P.Tsoukalas got on the score sheet again, as did S. Pappas.

Surprise packet Adelaide Cobras pulled off another good win this week, pole-axing the hapless Enfield Falcons 5-2. Leading only 2-1 at half time, the Cobras ran away with the game in the second half.

N. Konstandopoulos scored a hat-trick; Zelko Bilandzic and L. Skoumbros adding a goal apiece. Scorers for the Falcons were J. Kosta and M. Moore.

The Panthers cubs went down 1-2 to Western Strikers at home. Strikers scored one goal in each half, Leonardi doing the damage in the first and Barbier in the second. Kestell scored in the second half to give the Panthers some respectability.

This team, the youngest in the League, never goes down without a fight, and if coach Ray Blair can keep the squad together for a few years, the Panthers should become a formidable force.

Aubin happy just to play

With four goals in the opening two rounds of the WA state season, veteran striker Nigel Aubin has proved that quality can overcome the age factor.

The Swan I.C. forward bagged a hat-trick in his side's 6-nil demolition of last season's form side Sorrento last weekend then hit his Swan's final goal in their 4-2 triumph over Rockingham City on Saturday.

The 37-year old, who played with Bath City in the U.K. in his younger days, was plucked from the amateur ranks little over 18 months ago by former State coach Eric Williams who was in charge of Stirling Lions at the time.

"He was happy enough with a social game but I managed to persuade him to help me, first with the Lions and then when I moved to Swan last season," he said.

Aubin was an integral part of the Swan side that last season won promotion to the Premier League having stormed their way to the 1st Division title.

"Nigel's a good finisher and holds the ball up well," his coach added.

Brett Klucznik

Around the grounds in the VPL

Continued from previous page

About two years ago the northern suburbs saw the birth of the Melbourne Raiders' Epping Stadium - a modern, soccer designated venue in a true growth corridor.

The stadium boasts first class facilities, a dual-level grandstand, and a billiard-ball surface, making it easy to see why it is also to be used as an Olympic training venue.

In fact the site is so attractive that at least one VPL president was surprised Carlton Soccer Club did not move in after their exit from Optus Oval in 1998.

Understandably, with the facilities it has at its disposal, the Raiders have joined the list of clubs seriously contemplating the NSL 2nd Division as well.

Oakleigh is suitably located in one of the demographic hubs of Melbourne's Greek community. Oakleigh for years has always been able to generate tremendous local support.

Oakleigh's club room is located on the eastern side of the ground, as is the press room - a portable office-style building which lies in an off-set position.

Patrons stand or sit on a terraced section on the east in front of the club room.

The club itself is renowned for its atmospheric Friday night atmosphere when the home team plays, and local caterers always serve up some terrific hot food.

Oakleigh boasts one of the smoothest surfaces in the league, which is naturally well-

watered as a result of the club lying in Melbourne's south eastern rain belt.

It appears to be a club seemingly content to stay with the pack in the VPL, yet if it did ever consider the proposed 2nd Division, at least it would have the crowds to further its cause.

Some estimates for Oakleigh's first game of the season were near the 2,400 mark, and the home gate average comes in at about 1,200.

Port Melbourne's Anderson Reserve is located very close to the city centre, perhaps five minute's drive away from the bustling Southbank/Crown Casino site.

The Sharks' club area is fairly modern, with the addition of a designated press box, but the support for the team has dropped sharply as a result of poor on-field results.

Nevertheless, good sponsorship (the major sponsor is a chain of telecommunications outlets) is already in place, and consequently the club believes that any push for inclusion in the 2nd Division could allow the club to generate even more of a corporate revenue base.

Preston is only 15 minutes' drive north of the city centre, Preston has always enjoyed strong support from northern Melbourne's Macedonian community. 1,000 - 1,500 fans per home game is a common sight.

The separate VIP box doubles as a press area, and the main stand (adjacent to the change rooms on the eastern side of the

ground) has seating for roughly 1,000.

BT Conner Reserve is a spacious expanse, with plenty of parking for the numbers that flock to games.

Like Heidelberg, the club reminisces about its halcyon days in the NSL, but it is speculated that Preston may be less willing to commit the dollars necessary to upgrade its site, as indicated by the long-fading advertising hoardings surrounding the main ground.

Tucked away in the quiet suburb of St Albans in Melbourne's north west, St Albans Saints' Churchill Reserve ground is located on a compact parcel of land.

Nevertheless, the club has been able to make good use of its space to produce a form team over the last three or four seasons. Two full-length grounds occupy the site.

The local council has apparently in the last year spent about \$44,000 on refurbishing the player change rooms.

In the next year or two the committee might extend the existing 2nd level members area to include a balcony, and may even add an open shaded area on the northern side, facing the away from the pitch.

According to club secretary Dennis Radic, the club presently lacks the capital to consider making a bid for a higher league.

Central sweep to top as leading sides stumble

By Jeremy Ruane

Central United swept to the top of the Ansett National Club Championship table after the fifth round of action, their emphatic come-from-behind 5-1 victory over previous leaders University-Mt. Wellington seeing them establish a two point lead, this after having started play in fifth place.

Assisting Central's dramatic rise to the top was a defeat for Napier City Rovers at Miramar Rangers, and a draw between the teams placed third and fourth on the table at the start of play, Manawatu and Nelson Suburbs.

And while Christchurch City went goal-crazy in the South Island derby, Metro recorded their first win of the campaign, at the expense of Waitakere City.

Central had the better of the early exchanges at Bill McKinlay Park, but it was Uni-Mount who took a tenth minute lead through James Patterson, and proceeded to look good value for it over the next half hour or so.

But Matt Fowler was making some impressive inroads on Central's right flank, and by the interval, the visitors were unlucky to be on level terms, with Graham Pearce - outstanding in the first spell - denying Campbell Banks just before the break.

In the very first minute of the second half, Matthew Vukovich pounced on a Simon Eddy blunder to level matters, and after a spell in which Uni-Mount went close on at least three occasions, substitute Stephen Mack struck twice in seventeen minutes to turn the match Central's way.

Banks earned Central a bonus point six minutes from time, while a rare goal from Jason New - hit with his wrong foot from thirty yards out - wrapped up the scoring in stoppage time.

Uni-Mount are joined on nine points by Manawatu and Nelson Suburbs, whose 1-1 draw in Palmerston North was marred by the second half dismissal of the home team's

Lazar Vukcevic. Shane Cunliffe was both hero and villain for Manawatu, scoring the opener in the 27th minute, then putting through his own net with eleven minutes left.

Few folk would expect Napier City Rovers to squander a half-time lead, but that is what happened at Centennial Park, as Miramar Rangers came from behind to overcome the Hawke's Bay club 2-1.

Leon Birnie struck right on half-time for Napier, but an own goal and a 65th minute winner from Nick Longley gave Rangers their second win of the season, and fifth-equal placing on the table with the team they conquered.

Arguably the surprise of the day came at Fred Taylor Park, where Paul Field's seventeenth minute goal proved enough for Metro to record their first win of the season, their 1-0 win over Waitakere City propelling Kevin Hagan's side off the bottom of the table for the first time this season.

In fairness to Metro, a result such as this had been on the cards following their efforts at Central United last week, but few would have picked it to take place at the home of the resurgent West Aucklanders, who went into the match having won their last two games, after yet another indifferent beginning.

Christchurch City scored an emphatic 5-2 victory over Dunedin Technical in "The Battle of the South", with Michael Boomer and Nathan Knox both bagging a brace for the visitors, this after Junior All White Brent Fisher had given City the lead inside two minutes.

Jason Tee and Jonathan Smith scored a goal in each half for the Chatham Cup holders, whose slide to the bottom of the table was not aided by the 73rd minute dismissal of Blair Scouller.

City's Paul Stanley was sent off at the same time, as southern pride spilled over in an otherwise card-less encounter.

NEW ZEALAND NATIONAL CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND FIVE RESULTS

Christchurch City	5-2	Dunedin Technical
B. Fisher (2) N. Knox (32, 76)		J. Tee (34), J. Smith (83)
M. Boomer (30, 48)		
Manawatu	1-1	Nelson Suburbs
S. Cunliffe (27)		own goal (79)
Miramar Rangers	2-1	Napier City Rovers
own goal (47)		L. Birnie (45)
N. Longley (85)		
Uni-Mt. Wellington	1-5	Central United
J. Patterson (10)		M. Vukovich (46), S. Mack (62, 79), C. Banks (84), J. New (90)
Waitakere City	0-1	Metro
		P. Field (17)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	BP	Pts
CENTRAL UNITED	5	3	1	1	10	5	+5	1	10
Manawatu	5	2	2	1	11	8	+6	1	9
Nelson Suburbs	5	2	2	1	9	7	+2	1	9
Uni-Mount	5	3	0	2	8	10	-2	0	9
Napier C.R.	5	2	1	2	6	3	+5	1	8
Miramar Rangers	5	2	2	1	8	8	0	0	8
Christchurch C.	5	2	0	3	9	12	-3	1	7
Waitakere City	5	2	0	3	8	8	0	0	6
Metro	5	1	1	3	4	9	-5	0	4
Dunedin Tech.	5	1	1	3	4	11	-7	0	4

ROUND SIX FIXTURES (APRIL 30):

- Central United v Miramar Rangers - Kivitea Street, Auckland
- Dunedin Technical v Manawatu - New Caledonian, Dunedin
- Napier City Rovers v. Christchurch City - Park Island, Napier
- Nelson Suburbs v. Waitakere City - Trafalgar Park, Nelson
- University-Mt. Wellington v. Metro - Bill McKinlay Park, Auckland

THE SCIENCE OF SOCCER VS STYLE

The inside story on the VIS tour of Malaysia and how Ernie Merrick's team is preparing our future international players

The VIS soccer squad arrived in Kuala Lumpur at 6.00am in the morning after a nine hour overnight flight departing Melbourne at midnight.

The squad has played in the National Youth League Southern Division for a seven month period and are currently second top on the ladder.

Several changes had occurred in January with the AIS seconding five players, two players transferring to VSF Premier League Clubs and Scott MacDonald moving to Southampton. Five fourteen year olds and a thirteen year old striker filled the scholarship positions and within three months are on their first overseas competitive tour.

The preparation was extensive involving acclimatisation training, nutrition and hydration lectures, implementation of injury prevention and management strategies, psychology sessions with Pat Farrell [who worked with Mark Viduka as he completed his transfer to Celtic] and recovery training.

All of this on top of normal coaching hours, strength and conditioning training.

The key, however, to tournament soccer - four games in eight days - hinges on the ability of the players to back-up with minimal rest periods.

A comprehensive recovery training program is vital in tournament situations hence the need for highly qualified staff in the areas of Sports Medicine and Sports Science. Australia is among the world leaders in these areas.

The daily schedule includes early morning stretching sessions, nutrition education, strategic coaching, video analysis, aquatic



Ernie Merrick's VIS side before leaving on their tour of Malaysia. Pic by Roy Hay.

recovery classes, massage, injury prevention, ice therapy and rehabilitative exercise. Matches are played every second day.

Tactics and game plans are discussed during the team meetings and match performance is evaluated.

The first game was against the Kuala Lumpur Under 19 side and since the next two matches were against very stiff opposition - Selangor Under 21 and the Under 19 Malaysian National Team - it was decided that would use our less experienced players.

This is a tough ask of the youngsters as all the Malaysian players we played are full-timers.

However, this is what the VIS Program is about. It is a developmental program and demands practical experience in international competition.

The first game - VIS v Kuala Lumpur Under 19 - kicked-off at 5.00pm [3.00pm Melbourne time].

Monday, 10th April 2000

VIS v Kuala Lumpur Under 19

VIS

E Galekovic, G Pantelidis, D Petkovski [S

De Vito], D Ostrowski, M Karas [D Rocco], S

Storey Capt. [E Papadopoulos], D Vucinic, R

Chillico [S Oksuz], I Ibraimi, D Terek [S

Dilevski], M Sham-Yuen.

VIS 1 Selangor 0

The players began the day with an early morning stretch followed by a high carbohydrate breakfast. A pool session was conducted by sports science staff before a team talk and pre-match meal.

The coach always has problems calming the nerves of young players on the first match of an overseas tour.

Today was no exception especially with the average age of the team

Continued next page

Continued from page 25

approximately 16 years.

The first 15 minutes of the match confirmed the lack of confidence of the VIS players. The KL team controlled the early play with the VIS struggling to retain possession. An early shot from KL produced a diving save from Eugene Galekovic who physically towered over the Malaysian strikers.

The defence held solidly thanks to the composure and strong tackling of George Pantelidis and in midfield Simon Storey and Denis Vucinic began to win control of the middle.

An injury to Ricky Chillico forced a substitution in the 16th minute and Daniel Rocco joined the fray.

Michael Sham-Yuen and David Terek were beginning to cause the KL defence problems in the front third of the field with quick runs in behind a very flat KL backline.

A forty metre diagonal pass from Simon Storey drifted over the defence into the path of Michael Sham-Yuen and the fourteen year-old calmly side-footed the ball inside the near post. This kept his VIS record intact of scoring in every VIS game [6] he has played in.

The goal, however, did not lift the performance of the VIS team and they continued to perform inconsistently. The defence coped with the pressure from the KL attack and the scoreline remained giving the VIS a first up win.

Wednesday, 12th April 2000

VIS v Selangor Under 21

VIS:

A Hrehoresin, G Pantelidis, D Petkovski, [I Ibraimi], J Dimozantos, M Karas, D Rocco, S Storey Capt., D Vucinic [R Chillico], D Terek, [S Oksuz], S Dilevski, M Sham-Yuen, [E Papadopolous].

VIS 0 Selangor 0

The game was played at a frenetic pace under floodlights at Selangor. The Selangor reserve side is very strong with the first team having recently been strengthened with the purchase of several national team players in a bid to win the M-League Championship.

The VIS played a long ball game initially

taking advantage of the short pitch. Several diagonal passes from Daniel Rocco and Simon Storey created attacking opportunities for the VIS strikers and wide players.

Jason Dimozantos maintained his aerial dominance at the back and Manny Karas worked relentlessly down the right flank. The nature of the game was none too friendly with several heavy tackles being delivered by both sides.

The young striker, Michael Sham-Yuen, received an elbow to the face but stayed on the pitch with his speed causing the Selangor defence marking problems.

David Terek provided good support up front and he received excellent service from Manny Karas on the wing.

Spase Dilevski crossed to the back post where an unmarked Simon Storey shot wide. Two free kicks from Storey and Terek taken from just outside the box were well saved by the Selangor keeper.

Most of the Selangor attacks came from the wings but Adam Hrehoresin collected the high balls comfortably.

The keeper leaves the VIS at the end of the tour to commence an AIS scholarship.

The game seesawed in the second half with neither side getting on top. In the dying minutes Ricky Chillico [who has a suspected thumb fracture] hit the crossbar and Evan Papadopolous shot wide from close range with only the keeper to beat.

The game ended in a draw with perhaps the VIS more than Selangor missing more of the scoring opportunities.

Thursday 13 April - Recovery Day.

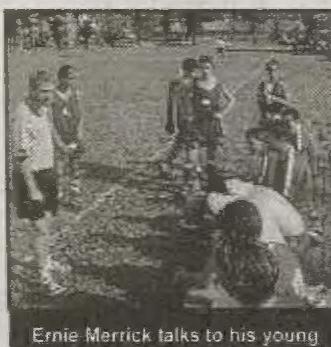
Stretching, massage, ice therapy and a light training session completed a recovery day for the VIS.

The two games in warm humid weather were beginning to take a toll on the players.

This was confirmed by the sports medicine team who noted elevated levels in morning resting heart rates of several individuals.

We were providing dietary supplements - vitamins C, E and multivitamin tablets to all players.

Two athletes were showing signs of viral



Ernie Merrick talks to his young charges during the tour.

infection and were given anti-biotics. The hydration status of all players was being closely monitored.

Friday 14 April - Preparation Day.

Tomorrow the VIS Soccer Team would face the most challenging team of the tour - the Malaysian Under 19 Team.

These players have been together for some time and as full-timers under national youth coach Alan Harris [ex-Chelsea] had recently completed a tour of Thailand.

The game was scheduled for Saturday evening at 5.00pm at the FAM Stadium.

Preparation commenced with a 30 minute stretching session before breakfast and since the weather had turned extremely hot and humid training at 11.00am was cancelled.

Video match analysis and individual player performance from the Selangor game was discussed in a very positive way before the squad completed a 45 minute aquatic session.

The afternoon comprised of physio and massage sessions.

Ricky Chillico had his wrist x-rayed and the surgeon ruled out a fracture. Ice therapy completed the physical side of the day's programs and the evening was spent planning team strategy.

Saturday 15 April - Match Day

VIS v Malaysia Under 19

VIS:

F Au, G Pantelidis, J Dimozantos [D Ostrowski], S Dilevski [D Petkovski], M Karas [S De Vito], D Rocco [I Ibraimi], S Storey Capt., D Vucinic, R Chillico, D Terek [S Oksuz], M Sham-Yuen, E Papadopolous.

VIS 0 Malaysia 1

The VIS fell to their first defeat of the tour losing to a well organised and extremely fit Malaysia Youth Team. The opportunities fell initially to the VIS who manufactured two scoring chances from wide crosses in the first 10 minutes.

Evan Papadopolous hammered both crosses after some good lead up work from Ricky Chillico but David Terek failed to connect with either.

Malaysia gained the dominance in midfield took advantage of poor marking to leave Fred Au in a one on one situation.

The Malaysian striker lifted the ball over

the diving keeper to put his team in the lead.

Daniel Rocco left the field with heat stress early in the game. Denis Vucinic worked hard to pressure his midfield opponents and was assisted by substitute Ibraim Ibraimi.

The Malaysians controlled the play and the VIS team was reduced to creating scoring chances from the counter-attack.

The second half was a different game altogether and the reorganised team shape of the VIS began to cause pay dividends.

David Petkovski and Evan Papadopolous began to beat their wing opponents and provide quality service for the strikers.

Simon Storey and Ibraim Ibraimi both had strikes blocked and Ricky Chillico made several clever dribbling runs through the middle.

In the last ten minutes the Malaysians conceded three corners all of which created panic in their six yard box.

The best chance of the game fell to thirteen yearold Sekan Oksuz who weaved past two defenders in the box and hit the post and the scoreline remained with the VIS losing one nil.

The final match of the tour took place on Monday with the VIS playing the Malaysian Under 16 Team.

This squad is being prepared for the World Youth Championships by Ron Smith the Technical Director of the Malaysian Football Association.

Ron was Head Coach of the AIS for ten years.

VIS 6 Malaysia U16 3

Physically the VIS was too strong for its opponents, leading 5-1 in the first half however after the break the heat took its toll - the tourists ending up winning 6-3.

An end-to-end game saw goals by Chillico, Sham-Yuen, Storey, Ibraimi, Pantelidis, Petkovski for the VIS.

"Our boys left on a high and also they understood more fully the needs and requirements of playing international soccer.

"The Malaysians were expecting physical soccer and that's what they got," said coach Ernie Merrick.

"I've been going to Malaysia since '95 and now they are becoming more knowledgeable tactically, physically growing and their talent ID is improving ... down the track they will be a major force in Asia soccer," added Merrick.

COMING SOON ...

'IT'S JUST

NOT CRICKET!'

North Sydney Council,

Soccer and Cricket at

Spirit Park.

BILL TURNER CUP

QUALIFYING MATCH:

Heathcote 1 St John Bosco 0

Concord 3 Tumbi Umbi 0

Melrose 9 Kambah 2

ROUND ONE:

Grafton 3 South Grafton 1

Catherine McCauley 8 Maclean 0

Lambton 4 San Clemente 0

St Phillips 3 Hunter Christian 1

Belmont 3 Hunter Sports 2

W. Wallsend 5 Macquarie College 0

Terrigal 4 Kincumber 0

St Edwards G'ford 6 The Entrance 0

Umina 5 Lisarow 0

Henry Kendall 2 St Peters Tugg' 1

Narara Valley 5 Gosford Christian 0

Berkeley Vale 3 Erina 0

Korokan 1 Northlakes 0

Woy Woy 4 Gosford 2

Naramalan College 3 Canberra 0

Wanniassa 3 St Edmunds 2

Caroline Chisholm 3 Goulburn 0

Calwell 5 Stromlo 0

Radford College 9 Yass 0

St Francis Xavier 8 Mullawree 0

Belconnen 7 Trinity Christian 1

McKillop 4 St Pats Gouldbourn 1

Tullamore C'tral 6 Tott'ham C'tral 1

Delroy 4 James Sheehan 1

Orange 6 Canobolas 1

Warilla 4 Woonona 3

Edmund Rice 8 Dapto 1

Vincentia 5 Ulladulla 1

NATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE - ROUND THIRTY THREE

NORTHERN SPIRIT V PARRAMATTA POWER

2	Robert Enes
3	Matthew Langdon
4	Matthew Bingley
5	Mark Rusan
6	Luke Casserley
7	Robbie Slater
8	Tony Perinich
9	David Seal
10	Nicola Bertl
11	Troy Cranney
12	Simon Catanzaro
13	Phillip Moss
14	Shane Lyons
15	Anthony Faria
17	Paul Bilokapic
18	Paul Wearne
20	Jess Van Stratten
21	Michael Cunico
22	Paul Henderson
23	Adam Snyder
24	Elvis Olic
25	Ryan Griffiths
26	Jack Sobczyk
27	Adam Griffiths
29	Ian Crook
30	Sean Cranney
31	Michael Prentice



1	Andrew Crews
2	David Barrett
3	Michael Santalab
4	Steve Eagleton
5	Richard Plesa
6	Joe Vrkic
7	Jacob Burns
8	Walter Ardone
9	Mile Sterjovski
10	Joel Griffiths
11	Steve Berry
12	Stephen Laybutt
13	Milan Biagajevic
14	Jon Angelucci
15	Danny Townsend
16	Mark Byrnes
17	Danny Kukucka
18	Lachlan Campbell
19	Matt Thompson
20	Barney Smith
21	Ahmid Elrich
23	John Gibson
26	Peter Bennett
30	Mike Gibson



Venue: North Sydney Oval - Friday 28 April 2000 7.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 1. Spirit wins: 0 Power wins: 1 Draws 0
 Last Week: Spirit 1-2 home loss to Cosmos.
 Power 2-1 away loss to Olympic.

FOOTBALL KINGZ V BRISBANE STRIKERS

1	Che Bunce
2	Riki Van Steeden
3	Jon Lammers
4	Jonathon Perry
5	Marcus Stergiopoulos
6	Wynton Rufer
7	Chris Jackson
9	Fred de Jong
10	Jeff Campbell
11	Robbie Middleby
12	Harry Ngata
13	Levent Osman
14	Baturm Suri
15	Ivan Vicelich
16	Lee Jones
17	Mark Elrick
18	Leigh Kenyon
20	Jason Batty
21	David Moya
22	Aaron Silva
23	Daniel Duke
24	Aaron Lines
32	Noah Hickey



1	Clint Bolton
2	Glenn Gwynne
3	Shane Stefanutto
4	Andrew Davidson
5	Matthew Belli
6	Brad Dutton
7	Shane Smeltz
8	David Pilic
9	Paul Foster
10	Wayne Srhoj
11	Chay Hews
12	Peter Dwyer
13	Stuart McLaren
14	Jade North
15	Adam Webber
16	Peter Grerson
17	Jeremy Harris
18	Nick Meredith
19	Wade Baldwin
20	Russell Miner
21	Jon McKain



Venue: North Harbour Stadium - Friday 28 April 2000 7.30PM
 Head to Head: Played 1 Kingz wins: 0 Strikers wins: 1 Draws 0
 Last Week: Kingz 0-2 home loss to Force.
 Strikers 2-2 away draw with Wolves.

GIPPSLAND FALCONS V CANBERRA COSMOS

1	Bojo Jevdjovic
2	Dean Fak
3	Manny Gotis
4	Mohmed Durakovic
5	Jeff Hopkins
6	Brian MacNichol
7	Andy Vargas
8	Clayton Bell
9	Robbie Puca
10	Sandy Robertson
11	John Hutchinson
12	Peter Kakos
13	Adrian Savage
14	Doug Marcina
15	Jonathon Buhuglar
16	Juan Nilo
18	Michael Katz
19	Igor Mandic
20	Simon Mlotto
21	Ben Cassar



1	David Millin
2	Toplica Popovich
3	Danny Burt
4	Nicholas Purdue
5	Jason Polak
6	David Winnie
7	Daniel Watkins
8	Alex Castro
9	Michael Musitano
10	David Arranz
11	Brian Hamilton
12	Harry James
13	Glen Kolpak
14	Ilija Prenoski
15	Robbie Hooker
16	Nikola Mrdja
17	Geoff Howarth
18	Grant Barlow
19	Scott Conlon
20	Elliot Zwangobani
21	Andrew Clark
22	PJ Roberts
23	Ivo De Jesus
24	Gabriel Gonzalez
30	Angelo Konstantinou



Venue: Mobil Park - Saturday 29 April 2000 7.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 10 Falcons wins: 2 Cosmos wins: 2 Draws 6
 Last Week: Falcons 3-1 home win over Knights.
 Cosmos 1-2 away win over Spirit.

MELBOURNE KNIGHTS V SYDNEY UNITED

2	Joey Rayher
3	Ivan Jolic
4	Ante Kovacevic
5	Jason Vukadin
6	John Didulica
7	Mark Silic
8	Dragi Nastevski
9	Ivan Kelic
10	Paul Urolic
11	Zoltan Zold
12	Murtala Toyin Abbas
13	Lance Plunkett
14	Paul Magdic
15	Ransford Banini
16	Alex Kiratzoglou
17	Brandon Vassalo
18	Rody Vargas
19	Zlatko Maglic
20	Martin John
21	Zeljko Susa
22	Slavko Rados
23	Michael Reda
24	Hrvoje Matkovic
25	Adrian Cervinski
26	Marko Prakalo
30	Lupce Acevski



1	John Crawley
2	Ray Younis
3	Mark Racker
4	Velimir Kupresak
5	Eddie Bosnar
6	Vince Savocca
8	Nahuel Arrarte
9	Mario Jermen
10	Ante Moric
11	Tom Podeljak
12	Tom Maric
13	Matthew Zec
14	Kain Rastall
15	Aytec Genc
16	Joe Moric
17	Nick Bozevski
18	Steve Bozinovski
19	Greg Saric
20	Steve Tollos
21	Zvonko Usijerka
22	Colin Luff
23	Terry Palapanis
24	Andy Rakic
25	Ante Deak
26	Fernando Pellegrino
27	Ante Duer
30	Brett Hughes



Venue: Knights Stadium - Sunday 30 April 2000 3.00PM
 Head to Head: Played 30 Knights wins: 13 United wins: 8 Draws 9
 Last week: Knights 3-2 away loss to Falcons.
 United 1-0 away loss to South Melbourne.

SYDNEY OLYMPIC V CARLTON

1	Jim Kourts
2	Scott Thomas
3	Chris Zorich
4	Peter Tsekens
5	Scott Baillie
6	Ante Juric
7	Zlatko Arambasic
8	Marcus Phillips
9	Pablo Cardozo
10	Brett Emerton
11	Chris Kalantzis
12	Sebastian Sinozic
14	Gabriel Mendez
15	Lindsay Wilson
16	George Goutzoullis
17	Paul Kohler
18	John Kyriazopoulos
19	Nick Carle
20	George Bouhoutsos
21	Lee Miot
22	Pete Zorbas
23	Dylan Macallister
24	Norman Tome
25	Hussein Jomaa
26	Alex Duric
27	John Perosh
28	Kresimir Marusic
30	John Karoubas



1	Dean Anastasiadis
2	Dave McPherson
3	Craig Deans
4	Simon Colosimo
5	Sean Douglas

LIVE FRIDAY 28 APRIL 7.30

C7 SPORT CHANNEL 13

NEWCASTLE BREAKERS V SOUTH MELBOURNE

**BREAKERS**

1 Bob Catlin
 2 Shane Pryce
 3 Andrew Roberts
 4 Adam Sanderson
 5 Todd McManus
 6 Glenn Sprod
 7 Travis Dodd
 8 Mark Wilson
 9 Chris Tancheski
 10 John Buonavoglia
 11 Luke Tomich
 12 Robert Angievski
 13 Brad Wieczorek
 14 Greg Owensi (below)
 15 Joshua Ferguson
 16 Vasko Trpevski
 17 Paul Wheeler
 18 Andrew Harper
 19 Chad Mansley
 20 Bradley Swancott
 21 Peter Juchniewicz
 22 Glenn Moore
 23 Damien Smith

SOUTH

1 Milan Udvaracz
 2 Steve Iosifidis
 3 Fausto de Amicis
 4 Nick Orlc
 5 Con Blatsis
 6 David Clarkson
 7 Steve Panopoulos
 8 Vaughan Coveny
 9 Paul Trimball
 10 Michael Curcija
 11 John Anastasiadis
 12 Richie Alagich
 13 Adrian Cuzzupe
 14 Anthony Magnacca
 15 Goran Lozanovski
 16 Jim Tsekinis
 17 Robert Liparoti
 18 Tasos Psoris
 19 Chris Jones
 20 Rade Culbirk
 21 Mustafa Mustafa
 22 Chris Roche
 23 Andy Vlahos
 24

LIVE SUNDAY 30 APRIL 6.00

C7 SPORT CHANNEL 12

MARCONI STALLIONS V ADELAIDE CITY FORCE

**STALLIONS**

1 Michael Turnbull
 2 Chad Gibson
 3 Mark Babic
 4
 5 Dominic Longo
 6 Pan-Keum Kim
 7 Christian Care
 8 Darren McDonald
 9 Zeljko Babic (below)
 10 Brad Maloney
 11 Mike Smith
 12
 13 Danny Invincible
 14 Buddy Farah
 15 Pierluigi di Gia
 16
 17 Francis Awaritefe
 18 Harry Karl
 19 Brendan Renaud
 20 David Aceski
 21 Paolo Marchesini
 22 Kris Trajanovski
 23 Vlado Zoric
 24 Josai Junior Sauturaga
 25
 26 Daniel Severino

FORCE

1 Gianluca Legati
 2 Ivan Zelic
 3
 4
 5 Alex Tobin
 6 Carlo Tailladira
 7 Damian Mori
 8 Carl Veart
 9 Nick Sabljak
 10 Aurelio Vidmar
 11
 12 Nathan Day
 13 John Fusco
 14 Michael Cartwright
 15 Louis Brain
 16 Matthew Kemp
 17 Angelo Costanzo
 18 Bradley Hassell
 19 Claudio Pelosi
 20 Adrian Cagalj
 21 Dong Ki Kim
 22 Shane Thompson
 23 Jonathan Lihou

Venue:**Breakers Stadium**

Friday 28 April 7.30PM



Head-to-Head: 17

Breakers: 2

South: 11

Draws: 4

Last Week: Breakers 0-0 draw with Carlton.
South 1-0 home win over United.**Venue:****Marconi Stadium**

Sunday 30 April 6.00PM



Head to Head: 48

Stallions: 22

Force: 17

Draws: 9

Last Week: Stallions 3-2 home win over Glory.
Force 0-2 away win over Kangaroos.**Want to see
soccer****every
weekend?****See more soccer
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Newcastle Breakers v South Melbourne Saturday night.
 Marconi Stallions v Adelaide City Force Sunday night.
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